

THE HISTORICAL EVOLUTIONARY PROCESS, BY ORGANIZATION
AND FUNCTION, OF THE OFFICE OF STRATEGIC SERVICES'
ASSESSMENT AND SELECTION PROGRAM

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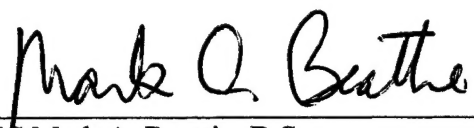
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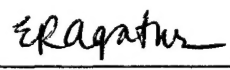
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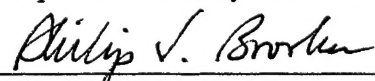
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ABSTRACT

THE HISTORICAL EVOLUTIONARY PROCESS, BY ORGANIZATION AND FUNCTION, OF THE OFFICE OF STRATEGIC SERVICES' ASSESSMENT AND SELECTION PROGRAM by Major Bryan P. Fenton, USA, 123 pages

This study examines the historical evolution, by organization and functional process, of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) Assessment and Selection (A&S) program. The (A&S) program was created by the OSS in response to mission failures that had been attributed to unreliable personnel.

First, the organizational evolution is traced through examination of America's first central intelligence agency, the Office of the Coordinator of Information (COI). This evolutionary process is further evaluated through study of the dissolution of the COI, and subsequent creation of the OSS. Additional examination outlines OSS mission requirements that necessitated an OSS assessment and selection process.

Second, the functional evolutionary process is examined through presentation of assessment and selection procedures used by the Chinese Ming Dynasty, Germany and Great Britain and their impact on the process eventually chosen by the OSS. The actual OSS A&S process is presented, highlighting the development and final product.

Third, the paper concludes with a presentation of the perceived effectiveness of the program and suggestions for improvement as outlined by the OSS A&S staff. Finally, a suggestion, that recommends using certain OSS A&S tasks in the assessment and selection procedures employed by the Special Forces community today, is submitted for consideration.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

People are the key to our future success. Lifelong military learning experience must train for certainty but educate for uncertainty. We must maintain our traditional emphasis on high-quality, rigorous training and reinforce it with effective education that encourages creative, thoughtful solutions to sensitive and high-risk situations.

The recruiting process, called assessment and selection, is a mix of art and science. . . .recruiting practices must allow us to keep pace with emerging needs for mission skills. . . .we must improve our assessment tools to understand what personal characteristics most likely result in a reliable SOF warrior. (USSOCOM 1997,19)

This statement, taken from *Special Operations Forces Vision 2020*, addresses the needs of a future special operations force, yet it easily could have been written in 1943 by the head of the Office of Strategic Services, William J. Donovan. The process of finding the “right person” for Special Operations missions is one that continually has received considerable attention, often from the three- and four-star general officer level. This challenge has daunted personnel interested in building these types of forces since the inception of America’s first true special operations force, the Office of Strategic Services (OSS).

Background

Today’s US Army Special Forces (SF) place an unusually high emphasis on the quality of soldier who is admitted to its training and operational programs. To meet this discriminating objective, the US Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (USAJFKSWCS) conducts the Special Forces Assessment and Selection (SFAS)

process. The goal of SFAS is to select the right person--one who possesses the needed attributes to successfully complete the Special Forces Qualification Course (SFQC) and to succeed in SF operational groups (Feeley 1998, 1). Yet, even with the importance placed on SFAS, few SF personnel know much about its true US origins and subsequent development.

The OSS is the forerunner of today's Special Forces. During World War II, they possessed a requirement to identify the type of person that could perform highly sensitive missions in support of the US wartime effort, but there were no formal US schools or testing centers to assist in this mission. How then did the OSS assess and select the personnel it needed for these operations?

Overview

By late 1943, the one-year-old OSS was recruiting and assigning personnel for service within its organization without the benefit of a professional screening process. This type of careless selection and employment resulted in the cancellation or failure of some highly important and strategic-level OSS operations, mainly because of the scarcity of suitable personnel for mission planning and execution. The lack of an assessment and selection process prevented the OSS from testing for attributes needed for almost all overseas, behind the lines missions. These needed attributes had to include being able to withstand both the physical and mental pressures of such an operation. Without a formal assessment and selection process, obtaining a person with these needed attributes was a hit-or-miss proposition. One such result of this lack of an assessment and selection process is detailed in *Sub Rosa--The OSS and American Espionage*. In the book, authors

Stewart Alsop and Thomas Braden detail an account of an inept OSS agent. Frustrated at having to hide his identity, the agent decided to do something that would attract some attention. The agent crossed into Germany from Yugoslavia, prior to D-day, and mailed a postcard to Adolf Hitler. The postcard read: "Dear Hitler, --- you. (Signed) An American captain IN GERMANY" (Banks 1995, 11). A person showing this complete lack of discretion was probably not well suited for working in a profession that demanded anonymity for success. For the above-mentioned agent, success defined in these terms was no longer attainable.

Additional reports concerning personnel decisions from the pre-assessment and selection period described many "high-strung or emotional types" who were not very successful as OSS operatives. One account circulated around the headquarters stated, "in most cases these men have suffered nervous breakdowns and other nervous ailments" (Banks 1995, 11).

Eventually, the recurrence of problems associated with random selection, as well as other OSS-confirmed deficiencies, led OSS leaders to establish an assessment and selection process that would circumvent these difficulties.

Discussion

The task then, as determined by the creators and staffers of the OSS, was how to best test, assess, and then select the personnel who would be invited to serve in this organization--specifically the personnel to be deployed overseas in an operational capacity. As the need for personnel to work in this capacity increased in accordance with the number of missions the OSS was being given to support the war effort, the selection

process would take on an even more important role. This type of complex personnel screening--before ever allowing candidates to serve in a unit--had never before been conducted in the US Armed Forces. After a series of operational failures, the OSS came to consider this type of microscopic examination extremely essential due to the nature of its missions. The organization could not afford to fail at a mission that included the job of "planning and operating special services (including secret intelligence, research and analysis, and morale and physical subversion) to lower the enemy's will to resist, carried on in support of military operations and in furtherance of the war effort" (Special Operations Field Manual 1944, 1).

The particular test and selection process that the OSS staff desired would examine not only the physical aspects of potential overseas operatives, but also the mental ones. The physical portion was designed to select those with above-average physical coordination and endurance, as defined by military physical tests of that time. The rather novel portion of the OSS Assessment and Selection (A&S) process focused on a candidate's mental make-up. Designed to reveal personalities of OSS recruits, it would also predict their ability to operate in the organization during what was expected to be the duration of the war. This thesis presents, as part of the evolutionary process of the assessment and selection function, the desired qualifications that the team of OSS architects finally settled upon, the mental and physical tests, and the assessed effectiveness of the program.

Scope

This thesis explores the beginnings, development and implementation of the OSS A&S process through an examination of its organizational and functional evolutions. This context encompasses the evolution of the OSS, the neophyte organization that needed an assessment and selection program, and the evolution of the functionality of assessment and selection. This thesis attempts to accomplish the above by introducing the proposition and offering a literature review in Chapter 1. Chapter 2 examines the Office of the Coordinator of Information (COI), the US's first attempt at organizing an agency specifically for the collection and centralized distribution of strategic level intelligence. This chapter outlines the COI's charter and its associated problems. Chapter 3 explores the dissolving of the COI and the creation of the OSS, the change of command and control procedures that this agency incurred, and the associated implications. It further covers new requirements dictated by military command lines that necessitated the atypical testing conducted in the OSS's A&S process. Chapter 4 explores the A&S process by outlining the initiation of the idea, the characteristics desired by the OSS, and the associated physical and mental tests conducted to determine candidates' suitability. Chapter 5 discusses the effectiveness of the program in accordance with its stated objectives and also qualitatively compares the OSS A&S process with the present day SFAS as discussed in the delimitation paragraph below. Additionally, this chapter presents one suggestion for improvement that is aimed at today's SFAS program.

Delimitation

This thesis does not attempt to conduct a formal quantitative comparison between the OSS A&S and today's SFAS. The OSS A&S was designed to identify personnel who would be able to perform a myriad of missions that included espionage, counterespionage, intelligence collection, subversion and/or sabotage, and guerrilla warfare. In today's environment, many of these missions are conducted by agencies other than Special Forces. An attempt to do a formal comparison between the two processes would not present an accurate picture of the present day process and the desired outcome. Additionally, this thesis will not conduct a quantitative examination of SFAS. Quantitative data obtained from previous studies will be interpreted as to its relevance and used for discussion as appropriate. Lastly, though some data may be mentioned and discussed, there is no intent on the part of this author to explore the impact the OSS A&S process had on assessment and selection programs in the civilian sector.

However, a limited qualitative conclusion is drawn concerning whether or not some of the assessment events used by the OSS might possibly be used in today's SFAS process. This narrative discusses the possible use of OSS tasks with regard type of testing and target audience.

Importance

The OSS A&S undertaking was the first of its kind in the history of the US military. US military use of the combination of psychological and physical testing was unprecedented. They had never before attempted to assess, in such a formal manner, the specific type of job a soldier should do, let alone predict the soldier's success at the job.

This A&S process produced many testing methods that would eventually be used and refined by a number of other military and civilian organizations that followed the OSS.

The archetype that the OSS established is invaluable, and several military and civilian organizations have adopted it, with some modifications for mission requirements, to achieve a force composition that is remarkable. Most of the military organizations have been in the SOF arena, but technological advancements and a changing threat environment have compelled non-SOF Army leadership to recognize the value of this process. With the help of the Army Research Institute (ARI), these conventional Army forces are considering the use of this type of testing method for the Army After Next (AAN) concept.

Primary and Secondary Research Questions

The primary research question is: What was the historical evolutionary process, by organization and function, which led to the development and implementation of the OSS assessment and selection process?

The secondary research questions are:

1. What was the origin and evolutionary process of the first centralized intelligence organization, the Office of the Coordinator of Information (COI)?
2. What was the origin and evolutionary process of the organization that followed the COI--the Office of Strategic Services (OSS)?
3. What was the origin and evolutionary process of the assessment and selection function?

4. What was the origin and evolutionary process of the OSS's A&S program?
5. Was the A&S process considered effective?
6. Are there any assessment tasks from the OSS A&S program that can be applied to today's Special Forces Assessment and Selection process?

Assumptions

1. There exists a large amount of previously conducted research about the COI and OSS and the evolution, missions, and operations of each.
2. There exists a limited amount of information on the OSS A&S process, yet it is sufficient to provide the data needed to conduct this research.

Literature Review

This study is an historical overview of the evolutionary process, by organization and function, of the OSS A&S program. The study uses primary and secondary resources to determine how these evolutionary processes unfolded. While numerous volumes have been consulted, only the most beneficial are mentioned below.

This study began by examining the evolution of the organization that created the A&S process--the OSS and its predecessor, the COI. Three secondary sources in particular assisted in the examination of the creation, missions, and inner-workings of these US intelligence organizations that advocated the development of an A&S process. *The Last Hero: Wild Bill Donovan*, written by Anthony Cave Brown, documents the life and work of William J. Donovan, the founder of the Office of the Coordinator of Information (COI) and later the Office of Strategic Services (OSS). This work thoroughly examines the problems associated with the COI startup and its subsequent

transfer to the OSS. *Secrets, Spies and Scholars: Blueprint of the Essential CIA*, written by Ray S. Cline, covers the nullification of the COI, the development of the OSS, and the role each played in the eventual creation of today's Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

Donovan and the CIA: A History of the Establishment of the Central Intelligence Agency, by Thomas Troy, provides insight into the relationships between Donovan and the OSS and the requirements that necessitated the OSS A&S process. Additional works detailed the specifics of OSS behind the lines missions.

To learn more about the evolution of the assessment and selection function, and in particular the OSS A&S process, three main sources have been consulted. *Assessment of Men: Selection of Personnel for the Office of Strategic Services*, by Donald W. Fiske, a primary source, was written by the OSS A&S staff. This work was compiled and published at the conclusion of a five-month study of their program. This book documents the work of the OSS A&S staff as they developed, organized, and implemented the OSS A&S program. It also discusses some of the lessons that the staff learned, and submits suggestions for improvement.

Two additional works that discuss the evolution of the A&S program are secondary in nature, and refer to the work conducted in the book by Fiske. *How Assessment Centers Were Started in the United States: The OSS Assessment Program* was written by Donald MacKinnon, a member of the original OSS A&S staff. MacKinnon delivers an executive summary of the A&S process and reveals some of the finer points not found in *Assessment of Men*. In *Personality and Prediction: Principles of Personality Assessment*, author Jerry Wiggins details the historical evolution of the

assessment and selection concept and important developments from Chinese, British and German endeavors. Additionally, he outlines some of the earlier programs that influenced the OSS A&S program. Wiggins also reviews in detail the work of the A&S staff and revisits their conclusions concerning the program's effectiveness.

CHAPTER 2

THE OFFICE OF THE COORDINATOR OF INFORMATION

To preach the message, to insist upon proclaiming it (whether the time is right or not), to convince, reproach, and encourage, as you teach with all patience. The time will come when people will not listen to sound doctrine, but will follow their own desires and will collect for themselves more and more teachers who will tell them what they are itching to hear. They will turn away from listening to the truth and give their attention to legends [2 Tim 4:2-4].
(Metzgar 1998, 5)

How did the US come to possess the capabilities associated with a centralized intelligence agency? What was its evolution? How did the relationship between the US and Great Britain affect these developments? This chapter discusses these questions and, importantly, the personnel issues associated with them.

British Assistance

In the first years of World War II, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill believed that it was absolutely necessary to ensure America's entry into the conflict, for with the US on his side he reasoned that Nazi-Germany could be quickly defeated. The US leaders, on the other hand, were not so sure of this country's place in the war. With most Americans intellectually confused as to how to stay secure in a world at war, neutrality and sales of resources to the British seemed to be the best policy. Yet, Nazi Germany's seemingly imminent achievement of what Napoleon had attempted and failed, that is, unitary control of Eurasia from the Urals to the Atlantic, only exacerbated the American state of confusion. To some Americans, the prospect of a Hitler-controlled

European continent was unacceptable. This situation would allow the preponderance of economic resources, technology, and military power in the world to belong to a totalitarian dictatorship--and one that despised the open society, representative government, and free economy of the US (Cline 1976, 1).

Even with the collapse of France and the near collapse of Great Britain, the most important American, US President Franklin D. Roosevelt, remained unconvinced that US entry into the war was what he or the populace desired (Cline 1976, 2).

In order to obtain a sample of US sentiment and to assist in achieving his desire for US participation, Churchill sent William S. Stephenson (code name Intrepid) to the US. Stephenson, the chief of British Secret Intelligence Services (SIS) in the US, had a single mission: bring America into the war or, if that was not possible, transform it into a neutral country that was hostile to Germany. After failing to cultivate a truly mutual relationship with the FBI, the only US civilian intelligence agency in existence at that time, Stephenson knew he had only one option--an exciting American named William J. "Wild Bill" Donovan (Brown 1982, 148).

Why the British deemed Donovan the best person through whom to influence the US resolve remains the subject of debate to this day. It is suggested that Stephenson viewed FBI director J. Edgar Hoover as eccentric, selfish, and a poor choice for providing President Roosevelt with an evaluation of strategic developments throughout the world. Additionally, Stephenson felt that Hoover proved unsatisfactory for the larger purposes that Churchill had in mind (Cline 1976, 26). After investigation and discussion with their

US-based contacts, the British believed that they found in Donovan a man temperamentally opposite and personally antagonistic towards the shortsighted FBI director. Plus, Donovan had connections.

Donovan possessed an impressive resume with a number of interesting achievements. He had received a Congressional Medal of Honor (CMH) in World War I and had risen to the rank of an accomplished financier on Wall Street, with enough interest in international business affairs to provide reasons for his periodic travels to Europe's trouble spots throughout the 1930s. Additionally, as a well-respected lawyer, he boasted considerable contacts and friends in Washington, DC, not the least of whom was President Roosevelt. Donovan was also a millionaire, a sophisticated patriot-nationalist, and an activist (inclined towards interventionism) in international politics, all of which served to provide him numerous invitations to participate in the inner workings of Washington politics (Cline 1976, 27). In fact, in the early months of 1940 Roosevelt had offered Donovan the post of Secretary of War--which, for reasons never stated, he had immediately refused (Brown 1982, 148).

The British, keenly aware of Donovan's influence with the President of the US and Washington political circles, invited Donovan to visit England in the summer of 1940 in order to show him British intelligence operations and war establishments. As a result of this trip, the British desired to use Donovan to relay to the US government the British intentions of fighting and winning the war. Yet, this goal proved somewhat problematic. At this time, the US was a neutral country. This meant that a foreign visit, such as

Donovan's, had to be approved by the President of the US in order to avoid any perceived violation of the existing informal laws concerning neutrality. Although Donovan was a personal friend of President Roosevelt, presidential permission had to be sought and obtained through an official chain of command. Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox appealed to Roosevelt, who not only granted permission, but also gave Donovan a \$10,000 credit line and a written reference (Brown 1982, 149).

To the British, Donovan's visit represented more than a friendly exchange of ideas. It was the first step in securing America's help in the war effort. The British planned to ask President Roosevelt for assistance, in the amount of \$750,000,000 worth of weapons and munitions, for their effort against Germany. They believed that showing Donovan what their war effort entailed would bolster their chances of procuring American aid. In the end, one part of this visit proved extremely fortuitous for the US (Brown 1982, 152).

On the trip Donovan met Colonel Stewart Menzies (known as "C" in the British government circles), the commander of Britain's SIS. The SIS had the mission of acquiring secret intelligence by all means throughout the world and of conducting counterespionage outside the British Isles. In addition to this organization, the British also possessed a unit that was called the Special Operations Executive (SOE). This unit was responsible for the conduct of special operations missions. These types of missions included unconventional, paramilitary or irregular warfare acts, such as sabotage and subversion.

The British chose to keep these two organizations separate. They believed that the intelligence function should concentrate on obtaining information and processing it into intelligence rather than on operations and the conduct of irregular warfare, lest the intelligence production and its associated quality falter. The British viewed an intelligence organization as too poorly trained, equipped, staffed, and organized for the special operations missions. Thus, in Britain the SIS retained control over the intelligence collection functions and the SOE was responsible for the unconventional warfare mission. Additionally, Churchill held that these types of organizations ought to be separate from the military (Irwin 1991,18).

These organizations, their concepts, the command relationships, and associated tasks piqued Donovan's interest almost insatiably. At this time, Donovan knew the US did not possess an organization with the ability to conduct strategic intelligence collection--intelligence that would be of value to policy makers. Much of the intelligence gathered by the US was operational or tactical in nature; it was collected and used by the various services that existed in the War Department, specifically the Army and the Navy. This was not, however, a collaborative effort. Nor was the intelligence collected by each service that laudable. The services had very little ability to gather and analyze data about events happening around the globe.

Additionally, the data each service gathered were not shared with the sister services, nor were they centralized. Thus, the President was not being effectively and efficiently informed about the events that might threaten the safety or, at a minimum, the

foreign interests of the US (Cline 1976, 2-3). Roosevelt even once confessed to Secretary of State Cordell Hull, Secretary of War Henry Stimson, and Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox--all present in his office to discuss the problems occurring in Europe--that the US was "in the dark as to exactly what was happening across the Atlantic" (Dunlop 1982, 205).

This visit to Britain with Colonel Menzies lit the spark that was to become the fire that would consume Donovan for the rest of his life. After returning from his trip to England and realizing that the collection of strategic intelligence and the execution of strategic special operations represented serious deficiencies in the US Army's reservoir of capabilities, Donovan decided to compose an informal report to Secretary of State Hull. In the report, Donovan stated, "England has done a superb job in this area from a strategic, tactical and administrative standpoint," and added "... this feat was even more impressive, given Britain's limited size and resources" (Brown 1982, 158).

Since the US did not possess the British type of intelligence organization, with the ability to collect intelligence on the world's more nefarious nations and characters, Donovan concluded it was his destiny to create one. He, for reasons to be mentioned later, envisioned the US equivalent of the British SIS and SOE combined: an organization with the ability to collect strategic intelligence, conduct espionage and counterespionage, and engage in the conduct of unconventional or guerrilla warfare. But even before he proposed this novel and somewhat daring idea, Donovan knew that he would face serious opposition from the chiefs of staff of the Army and the Navy and their civilian

counterparts, the Secretary of War and the Secretary of the Navy. Still, he was not prepared for the magnitude of outcry that he received from other organizations within President Roosevelt's administration. In fact, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) headed the list with its vehement opposition to the concept. Unknown to anyone outside the Bureau, the FBI had been attempting to form its own international intelligence arm, an endeavor that Hoover did not want to forfeit.

Because his ideas were in a very conceptual stage, Donovan believed that he still needed to acquire something more concrete to propose to the President and his cabinet. As a result, Donovan sent US emissaries back to England to gather ideas concerning the further development of his proposed US intelligence organization. The US representatives sought additional assistance from Colonel Menzies and his friends among the SIS and SOE personnel. The SIS and SOE, already involved in unilateral operations, had a tremendous amount of experience in placing agents behind the German lines in France, Holland, Belgium, and other occupied nations, and they excitedly shared their success with the Americans. In addition to gathering intelligence, these organizations had experience in engaging the German Army in a type of guerrilla warfare that was conducted by organizing, training, and utilizing members of various resistance organizations in sabotage and subversion activities. These ideas, along with the associated structure and the command and control, were given to the US representatives to study. The US personnel departed, thankful for the British assistance.

Donovan continued to believe that the roughly equivalent US organization should combine the intelligence and operations functions. He had witnessed first-hand the frequent turf battles that took place between the SIS and the SOE, and had concluded that any service that these organizations eventually provided had suffered some degradation as a result of these quarrels. Thus his concept for the US organization of a centralized intelligence agency differed in this aspect from the British model. Unlike the British model, Donovan believed that it would be necessary to propose a US organization that would retain control over what he saw as two main functions--intelligence and operations. However, with regard to command and control Donovan tended to side with the British. He would propose that his organization be under civilian control and would attempt to design it so that it would report directly to the president. With these and numerous other ideas finally on paper, Donovan formulated his plan for the circulation of his concepts in the Washington decision circles, and continued lobbying President Roosevelt and other governmental agencies that had previously opposed him.

Preaching the Message: The Office of the Coordinator of Information (COI)

Despite heightened opposition to his further developed ideas, Donovan continued to preach his message concerning efforts to establish the type of organization that he believed was missing from America's military repertoire. Although this type of organization represented a threat to other agencies at the highest levels of the US government, Donovan was so convinced that this type of organization was essential to the national defense and to the success of any US war effort, that he doggedly pursued all

avenues for approval. When he realized that he would receive no support in the advancement of his ideas from the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) or from anyone in the military intelligence community, he decided to use the relationship that he had established with Washington's most powerful person. He went to see his friend, the President.

Captivated by the idea and in total agreement with Donovan's approach to the centralized intelligence concept, President Roosevelt immediately asked Donovan to put together another report on this type of organization. Donovan consented, and produced for the President a rather lengthy document, *Memorandum of Establishment of Service of Strategic Information*. Some of Donovan's main points of emphasis were:

strategy without information on which it can rely is useless and information is useless unless it is intelligently directed to the strategic purpose. Although we are facing imminent peril, we are lacking in effective service for analyzing, comprehending, and appraising such information as we might obtain (or in some cases have obtained), relative to the intention to potential enemies and the limit of the economic and military resources of those enemies. Critical analysis of this information is as presently important for our supply program as if we were actually engaged in armed conflict. . .it is essential that we set up a central enemy intelligence organization that would itself collect either directly or through existing departments of government, at home and abroad, pertinent information concerning potential enemies.

The basic purpose of this Service of Strategic information is to constitute a means by which the President, as Commander-in Chief, and his Strategic Board would have available accurate and complete enemy intelligence reports upon which military operational decisions could be based. (Cline 1976, 33)

Additionally, Donovan elaborated that the organization would not "take over the home duties of the FBI, nor the intelligence organizations of the Army and Navy" (Brown 1982, 161) and he argued that this new organization should: "(1) have sole

charge of intelligence work abroad, (2) coordinate the activities of the military and naval attachés and others involved in the collection of information abroad, and (3) classify and interpret all information from whatever source obtained to be available for the President and for such of the services that he would designate” (Brown 1982, 161).

After reviewing the memorandum, President Roosevelt had a follow-up meeting with Donovan in which he parlayed his thoughts concerning the recently proposed organization. He acknowledged that the US needed such an organization and stated his agreement with Donovan’s ideas. President Roosevelt also spoke of his desire for this new intelligence agency to possess within a single organization the capabilities that the British currently needed two to undertake. To emphasize this point, the President directed that this newly created organization “would be responsible for covert offensive action behind enemy lines as well as collection and analysis of intelligence” (Cline 1976, 34). Additionally, he told Donovan that the director of the organization would hold the rank equivalent to that of a major general--and that the first director would be William J. Donovan himself.

Roosevelt then issued orders in June 1941 for the formation of a unit to be called the Office of Coordinator of Information (COI) (Brown 1982, 165). He officially designated Donovan as the “Coordinator of Strategic Information” and made him responsible only to the President of the US. A key clause in the COI directive granted Donovan:

authority to collect and analyze information and data, military or otherwise, which may bear upon national defense strategy; to interpret and correlate such strategic information and data, and to make it available to the President and to such other

officials as the president might determine, and to carry out, when requested by the president, such supplementary activities as may facilitate the securing of strategic information not now available to the government. (Cline 1976, 34)

The directive also emphasized the responsibility placed on Donovan to collect strategic intelligence, and to pass to the office of the President and his policy advisors centrally correlated and analyzed information. Additionally, this order is said to have invented the term "national security" and used this term to explain the need for such an intelligence activity--possibly as some sort of cover to accomplish almost anything Roosevelt desired done. The status of the COI, as per the directive, was one of an independent organization, outside of any Cabinet department and with wide freedom of action. The term "coordinator" implied that this office would be one of volunteering to help other agencies, not dictating to them. It was all there, the organization to fill the role desired by Donovan--a central intelligence agency (Cline 1976, 36).

Yet, for all the prudent preparation, the new organization was not without problems. First, the independent status so coveted by Donovan guaranteed that the COI would receive strong opposition from all the other intelligence organizations that existed within the governmental hierarchy. Second, the unusual status of what was to be called the "Executive Offices of the President" left the new organization exposed to abuses of power by future presidents. Third, a clause in the order that stated that the COI would carry out "supplementary activities when requested by the President" was designed to rationalize the conduct of any number of secret actions, and could possibly be used to cover a "multitude of sins" (Cline 1976, 36). Perhaps the most troubling to Donovan,

however, was the confusion over translating the directive into real, tangible, intelligence actions, that is, what actions or missions his organization should carry out. Still, his dream had finally been realized and the work was just beginning.

Conclusion

An important irony to point out is that Donovan did not put together a central intelligence organization all on his own, even though it appears so. While it is true that President Roosevelt accepted the concept of a central intelligence agency because of Donovan's insatiable desire and his extremely hard work, it is also valid that this new organization may have never come into existence without strong British intervention. The British envisioned the US as a future superpower with a strong presence in Europe--a vision that was unarguably ahead of its time. The British concept of a World War II Europe, one that involved US participation to secure an Allied victory, was without question infinitely more far-sighted than the position taken by US government officials during this period. Many of these officials favored isolationism. Translating the British vision into action turned out to be an extremely fortuitous event for the US, especially in the intelligence arena. With British assistance in designing the COI concept and structure, and selecting its lead man (Donovan), the US's European ally set the course for future US intelligence organizations and operations.

Nevertheless, Ray Cline suggests in his book, *Secrets, Spies and Scholars: Blueprint of the Essential CIA*, that the British were actually conducting a form of covert political action by helping the US develop a central intelligence system. But Cline also

points out that to view British actions solely in this light, and to believe the British had only their own interests in mind would be somewhat shortsighted. He explains that the British did need US involvement in order to guarantee the favorable outcome that they desired for World War II, but that one must be aware of the fact that the two powers were forced together out of a necessity that had been identified more than twenty-five years earlier (Cline 1976, 36).

This necessity for cooperative action had been suggested when British envoys visited the US in the first part of the century to discuss the development of a permanent partnership between British intelligence and its US service counterparts. Yet the project died, either through personnel turnover or failure to find a politically powerful patron in the era of US isolationism. During World War II, the British resurrected the idea and advanced it with the work of Colonel Stephenson. They desired to provide the US with information, intelligence, and experience in a war that the US populace was now eager to enter. Luckily for the US, this British continuation of early-century initiatives turned out to be prodigious--one that was to be extremely beneficial for both sides (Cline 1976, 37).

CHAPTER 3

THE OFFICE OF STRATEGIC SERVICES

Intelligence provided for Dragoon. . . was probably the fullest and most detailed of any provided by G2 AFHQ in a series of combined operations commencing with Torch. . . A rough estimate of the proportion of accepted ground Intelligence supplied by the three Allied agencies shows that 50% was provided by the OSS, 30% by the SR [French] and 20% by [the British]. (Brown 1982, 586)

What was the change in the operational environment that would necessitate the renaming of the Coordinator of Information (COI) to Office of Strategic Services (OSS)?

This chapter attempts to answer the above question by continuing exploration of the organizational evolution of a US central intelligence agency, and its eventual requirement for an assessment and selection program. This chapter outlines the dissolution of the Office of the Coordinator of Information (COI) and the birth of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), and sets forth the OSS's associated structure and missions. Additionally, this chapter offers examples of the missions that would eventually lead the OSS to decide that its service to the nation was worthy of personnel chosen through the A&S process.

From COI to OSS

Donovan, though busily working away in the newly, officially-sanctioned COI, was not totally satisfied. He had recruited many of the talented people who would carry this organization to new heights and accomplish incredible tasks. He had personally selected these personnel from industry, banking, politics, and academia. The unit came to be filled with an abundance of innovators and operators. Though staffed by military and civilian personnel, it was viewed primarily as a civilian organization, due to its reporting requirements and chain of command, and was not considered completely

trustworthy or reliable by the military service chiefs. In fact, in the chiefs' estimation, the credibility of Donovan's staff was so suspect that his organization was excluded in the distribution of the increasingly important MAGIC message traffic. MAGIC messages were the compilation of intercepts that had resulted from a penetration of the Japanese diplomatic code. The Japanese used this diplomatic code to transfer information from Japanese diplomatic posts to mainland Japan. It contained messages that, in numerous instances, could have been extremely beneficial to Donovan's organization (Brown 1982, 193).

Additionally, Donovan continued to be intrigued with the paramilitary operations that the British conducted using their Special Operations Executive (SOE) unit. Though the COI was structured to allow for planning and accomplishment of such missions, Donovan had not yet figured out how to get his organization permission to conduct this type of work. These special missions appeared even more important after Pearl Harbor, and Donovan, knew covert operations were critical to the future of warfare. Donovan also believed that in order to be truly effective in the changing operational environment, especially if he desired to have his Special Operations (SO) branch used in a paramilitary role, his new civilian organization must take on a military aura (Cline 1976, 49).

As a strictly civilian-coded organization, the numerous personnel management and logistics preparations required for possible wartime activities would be impossible for the COI to manage, especially if its military personnel were suddenly taken away for use elsewhere. Donovan, due to the civilian status given the COI, would also be unable to grant deferments to key civilian personnel and demand priorities for transportation and supplies, all problems that were easily handled in a military organization during a

wartime period. In addition to these problems, having the status of a civilian organization in the time of war would greatly limit the type and number of opportunities for operations offered to him (Cline 1976, 49).

With the newly-formed Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) as the nominated instrument for planning and advising on strategic and military policy issues (no longer was it the service components--Army and Navy), and with possible US intervention in the war, a different governmental system took hold. This was a new hierarchy that Donovan would have to compete with for missions, and one that was distinctly different from what had been in existence during the creation of the COI, only one short year prior. For the US, the military instrument of power was now preeminent.

For Donovan to promote the COI as the central strategic source, and yet collect, analyze, and report information *only* to President Roosevelt--and not to the Joint Chiefs--seemed inconsistent in a climate controlled by military requirements. To neglect the JCS, the specifically-appointed instrument for planning and advising on strategic military policy issues, would be a style of mission management that could have possibly ended up canceling Donovan's operations and dissolving the organization that he had fought so hard to build. Donovan quickly recognized this. After Pearl Harbor, the US rapidly moved in the direction of military involvement, and Donovan realized that the COI was not going to be included as he had envisioned (Cline 1976, 50). Understanding this, he attempted to redefine the COI's relevance, and proposed a change.

In March 1942, Donovan told President Roosevelt that he believed that it was necessary to convert the COI into a more militarily-aligned organization. He went on to explain to the President that this opinion was founded in his belief that the JCS viewed

the COI as a peacetime unit, and that it was increasingly being overlooked or bypassed for input on key national decisions, specifically those of an intelligence nature. If this continued, he reasoned, all the work that had gone into the development, creation, and operation of the COI would be for naught. Donovan explained that the organization needed to be placed in the military arena into which the nation's efforts were increasingly being cast. The only solution that Donovan could envision, and that he desired, was for President Roosevelt to approve the retasking of the organization under the Joint Chiefs of Staff (Cline 1976, 50).

Following Donovan's advice, President Roosevelt, in June 1942--per Executive Order 9182--dissolved the COI and, in order to make the change complete, replaced it with the newly named Office of Strategic Services (OSS). Though renamed, there was no structural change that took place with the signing of the order, as the OSS inherited the former COI's organization and functions. Yet to Donovan, the name and command changes were significant in that they were intended to replace the old mindset with a new one (Cline 1976, 50).

Executive Order 9182 not only granted Donovan's wish to change the COI into a "quasi-military" organization, but it also clearly delineated the new duties and command relationship of this unit. In the past, the COI had reported directly to the President, but now this was not the case. This document directed that the OSS duties during the war depended upon what the Joint Chiefs of Staff required (Cline 1976, 51). An excerpt from this order notes the following:

By virtue of the authority vested in me as the President of the United States and as the Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, it is ordered as follows:

1. The Office of the Coordinator of Information, established by Order of July 11, 1941, exclusive of the foreign information activities transferred to the Office of War Information by Executive Order of June 13, 1942 shall hereafter be known as the Office of Strategic Services, and is hereby transferred to the jurisdiction of the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff.
2. The Office of Strategic Services shall perform the following duties:
 - a. Collect and analyze such strategic information as may be required by the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff.
 - b. Plan and operate such special services as may be directed by the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff.
3. At the head of the Office of Strategic Services shall be a director of Strategic Services who shall be appointed by the President and who shall perform his duties under the direction and supervision of the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff.
4. William J. Donovan is hereby appointed as Director of Strategic Services.
5. The Order of July 11, 1941 is hereby revoked.

Franklin D. Roosevelt
Commander-in-Chief (Cline 1976, 51)

In this form, the OSS now was an organization as Donovan had originally desired: an organization that was able to conduct intelligence gathering, analysis, and reporting, in addition to unconventional warfare activities. In a letter to President Roosevelt, written just before the official document was signed, Donovan states:

... an order from the Joint Chiefs of Staff...which would bring more closely together the Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and our own agency.

I hope you will approve the order. It exactly conforms to your original directive to me in both name and function--but which was finally modified at the insistence of the Army and Navy. The present proposal comes at their insistence. The services [Army and Navy] now seem to have confidence in our organization and feel that we have in motion certain instrumentalities of war useful to them.

For these reasons and in order more closely to integrate with the armed forces the various elements that we have been developing. . .here would then be welded into one fighting force every essential element in modern warfare. You will note that I have also provided for the Commandos. (Cline 1976, 50)

In December 1942, the last official transfer document was published, as the OSS was reaffirmed as being placed under direct control of the JCS through the official publishing of JCS Directive 155/4/D (Irwin 1991, 44).

OSS Structure

One would have good reason to believe that the change from a civilian agency to one under a military chain of command, with its associated connotations of rigidity and bureaucracy, would have affected the OSS's established working environment. Nothing could be further from the truth. The change to a more militarized working environment did not even briefly interrupt the group's innovative and maverick spirit, nor its recruitment of personnel possessing qualities that Donovan desired to have permeate his organization. Even with the new command and control lines to the JCS, the OSS remained an organization in which civilians supervised military personnel, enlisted soldiers supervised officers and women were to be more than just secretaries in uniform. All of these management techniques or personnel utilization styles were unheard of in the supervising JCS organization. The OSS had obtained a legendary status due in part to its highly secretive manner and superbly talented personnel. It had also earned a respect, though grudgingly at times, from the JCS and the military two services that would grow throughout the war (Cline 1976, 52).

The structure of the original OSS, active throughout most of the war, was essentially the one outlined for the former COI. However, the OSS now placed greater emphasis on its unconventional, paramilitary-action elements. This emphasis on unconventional warfare actions, so called "dirty fighting," was initially adopted with some reluctance. Many military personnel viewed this indirect fighting style as the "coward's way" and in conflict with the American image of respectable warfare (O'Toole 1991, 405). Donovan dismissed these ideas.

The main body of the agency consisted of two major directorates: Operations and Intelligence. These directorates oversaw nine major branches that conducted a wide variety of activities. The activities covered a spectrum of missions and consisted of research and analysis of information available to the general public, development of concealable explosives and miniature submarines, conduct of covert psychological warfare and non-permissive (behind enemy lines) combat, and intelligence-gathering operations (Banks 1995, 8). This variety of activities, in addition to the types of personnel conducting them, was described by a former OSS staff member in this manner:

While a professor in Washington was studying the transportation system in France, an ex-Hollywood cameraman was making movies of war crimes for the benefit of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, a sergeant in Washington was drawing a chart for the use of the generals in Kandy, an Italian-Speaking American was parachuting into the Brenner Pass, and a Major in London was cabling home in secret code asking about his promotion. (Banks 1995, 9)

As it developed, the OSS grew in size, reaching a total strength of approximately 13,000 by the end of 1945. This number included all US-and overseas-based personnel, both support and operational. Of the nine OSS branches, two relied extensively on personnel who would be selected through the OSS's A&S process, and for that reason are more relevant to the topic of this research. These branches were the Special Operations Branch and the Secret Intelligence Branch.

Special Operations Branch

The Special Operations branch (SO) fell under the purview of the Deputy Director of Operations (DDO). The DDO had four branches under his control: Special Operations, Morale Operations, Operational Groups, and the Maritime Unit. The Special Operations Branch mission read as follows:

The Special Operations Branch. . . is responsible for the following:

- a. Sabotage
- b. Direct contact with and support of underground resistance groups.
- c. Conduct of special operations not assigned to other governmental agencies and not under direct control of theater or area commanders.
- d. Organization, equipment and training of such individuals or organizations as may be required for operations not assigned to other governmental agencies. (OSS Special Operations Field Manual 1944, 3)

Additional tasks included the conduct of subversion in enemy and enemy-occupied countries, and of unilateral guerrilla warfare. The SO branch, under the direction of OSS General Order number 9, was handed the responsibility of planning and conducting these operations (Irwin 1991, 44). In the beginning of its existence, this portion of the OSS was directed by Lieutenant Colonel Ellery C. Huntington, a former All-American quarterback at Yale and successful Wall Street attorney. His Executive Officer and Chief Operations Officer was Major George E. Brewer, a former Yale English teacher and Broadway playwright (Irwin 1991, 45).

Secret Intelligence Branch

The Secret Intelligence branch (SI) was chartered to place OSS agents into Axis-occupied territories and into Germany itself for the purpose of strategic intelligence collection. First-generation Americans who were fluent in French, German, and Italian were identified and targeted for recruitment by the OSS for use within the SI branch. In addition to written, verbal or visual intelligence gathering, this branch was also responsible for executing a mission considered extremely important to another of the OSS's branches--the Research and Development (R&D) branch. In this project, called the "I Cash Clothes Project," an OSS agent using an established cover story traded new articles of clothing, wristwatches, eyeglasses, key rings, luggage and other items, for ones commonly worn by civilian and military personnel in a targeted area. The agent would

then return these items to the OSS offices in order to allow for their duplication by R&D and eventual use by OSS counterparts (O'Toole 1991, 411-414).

Missions Vignettes

Activities conducted by the OSS were extremely varied and numerous. These missions, in which personnel participated in paramilitary, unconventional warfare and intelligence operations, possessed one common denominator: they were behind enemy lines. And, it was behind the enemy lines that the consequences for not selecting the right person to carry out the mission could be the most serious. In these types of missions, OSS personnel were subjected to the gravest dangers, and consequently a single misstep could be disastrous, not only for the agent, but also for the US's strategic-level desires. Untold numbers of OSS missions, from the SI and SO branches, fell into this category. Some examples of these types of missions provide insight into what was expected of an OSS agent.

For instance, the following scenario demonstrates the requirements for OSS agents to act coolly and decisively under pressure. An OSS agent walked up the steps of a railway station in a populous city in France. He was dressed so he would not draw attention to himself--respectably, but not too prosperously--and had a well-worn suitcase in each hand. For all practical purposes he appeared to be just another French face in this heavily occupied section of the train station. At the appropriate time, he handed his ticket to the collector and moved toward the train. At that moment, someone tapped him on the shoulder.

A Gestapo agent, dressed in black, motioned for him to move out of the line and over to the side. Another Gestapo agent pointed to his suitcases and demanded that they

be opened. The OSS operative put the suitcases on the platform and opened one. It contained soiled clothes, a razor, a toothbrush, a piece of soap, and a cheap novel for the long train ride. The Gestapo agents pointed to the other suitcase. The OSS operative acted apologetically. He explained that his acquaintance, the suitcase's owner, had the key and had forgotten to give it to him. The OSS man explained that he thought the case contained personal belongings. He apologized and asked if the German gentlemen could wait while he located his friend. He told them he would return to the train station within the hour. The Gestapo agents, who had no patience for this bumbling, were convinced that he was harmless and motioned for this confused little man to leave. They were done with him and moved on to check other passengers.

An hour later, this confused little man was in a hotel room, opening the locked suitcase. It contained a radio that he used to transmit to London information that he had gathered during his trip. The information that the agent passed to London stated that the German Seventh Corps Headquarters was located at a junction next to the town of Periot, France (Alsop 1946, 4). Two days later, a piece in a London newspaper read: "A road junction near the town of Periot, thought to house the German Seventh Corps Headquarters, was severely strafed yesterday by a flight of American fighter-bombers" (Alsop 1946, 4-5).

A second example serves to reinforce the peril that OSS personnel operating behind the lines faced and the attributes needed to handle such situations. In this scenario, an OSS agent was operating behind German lines in France. After completing some much-needed coordination, he was attempting to return from Paris to his Operational Area (OA) in the Bordeaux region. He had already overcome the dangers of

receiving the required travel permits so, feeling fairly safe, he decided to use the train to get to Bordeaux.

He approached and entered a train station in Paris. As he stood on the platform with his suitcase, he was struck with a feeling that something was terribly wrong. Then it dawned on him; the platform that he was standing on was completely deserted. With little time to react, he boarded the train and sat down with suitcase in hand. The suitcase contained a radio, his lifeline to the US. As the train began to pull away from the station, though, he realized that he had made a terrible error in judgment.

The train had been reserved specifically for high-ranking German staff officers, and seated directly across from him was one of the most famous--Field Marshall Erwin Rommel. Acting as though he was a confused French businessman, the agent spoke quickly and apologized profusely to Field Marshall Rommel for disturbing him. The "French businessman" muttered something about getting the wrong train connection, and requested to get off at the next stop or as soon as possible. Rommel invited him to stay when he saw that they were both headed to the Bordeaux region, and then came across the aisle to take a seat beside the OSS agent.

Apparently the agent's cover achieved the desired effect, for Rommel was very talkative. During their time together, Rommel discussed his plans for a tour of the Southern defenses and related to the French businessman the dangers of traveling while subversives and enemy agents wondered about. After the discussion concluded, Rommel stood up, excused himself in order to retire to a sleeping compartment, thanked the businessman for his company, and departed.

At last the agent believed that he had a moment to relax, and did so while considering what consequences would have befallen him if Rommel had asked to look in the briefcase. Then, when one of Rommel's junior officers returned, the agent tensed up again. The agent reminded himself to remain calm, yet somehow he felt that his disguise had not worked. Then the junior officer extended an invitation for tea from Rommel to the businessman. The agent accepted and the remainder of the ride proved uneventful (Alsop 1946, 30-31).

Though Rommel had failed to realize it, he had just given this agent the highest tribute awarded in this type of work: belief in the credibility of the cover. This spoke volumes about the work accomplished by OSS personnel.

Nevertheless, sometimes agents were apprehended despite having taking all required precautions, and in these instances their reactions could truly determine the success or failure of an operation. Here's what happened in one case. The Gestapo in North Holland picked up an OSS agent, referred to by the codename of "Minister." He had been attempting to send back information concerning identified German anti-tank positions that were located in his area of operations. After surprising him, the Gestapo interrogated him and placed him in a cell while they decided what to do with him.

The Germans, anxious to obtain any information on the Allied invasion plans, finally decided to allow Minister to continue sending messages at the pre-arranged hours in order to monitor the answers from what they believed was an unsuspecting OSS operator on the other end. In doing so, they reasoned they could place German units in a position to ambush the Allied invasion force. After being beaten senseless, the Minister was removed from his cell and directed to make contact with his higher headquarters and

obtain the information. He was informed that if he alerted OSS headquarters to his present predicament, this transmission would be his last. The Germans stood by with their Bren guns to insure his compliance.

Even though he had received severe beatings and was seriously injured as a result, Minister had the presence of mind to remember the training he had received just prior to his infiltration for this mission. Before he left England, it had been arranged that if he were ever in trouble, he would employ words that were inconsistent with his courteous demeanor. Communications from him that included words such as “damn,” “darn,” or “bloody” would signal his superiors that he had been compromised and was now communicating with them under duress. So, procedures were in place to inform his headquarters of his present situation and to do so without the knowledge his captors. He knew that he must do this in order to avert disastrous consequences and loss of Allied lives.

At the appropriate hour the contact was initiated by a call from approaching supply planes: “Hello Minister, this is Bill calling. We are sorry we could not come over with the packages last night, but the weather was bad. Over.” Minister replied: “Yes Bill, I understand that the weather was bad; it was *bloody* awful standing down here in the cold. Did you hear that? Over.” A pause followed, and then the reply: “Minister this is Bill. O.K. I received that, O.K. What do you want us to do? Over.”

Minister replied: “Look Bill, I have a new place to drop, a *darn* good place. I will give you the coordinates. Are you ready?”

"O.K. Ready. Over." Minister replied: "Hello, Bill. Here are the coordinates." Minister specified a location on the coast of Denmark. "Our friends will be coming there very soon, you know. Make *damn* sure you drop to them. O.K.?"

"Minister, this is Bill. O.K. We will try not to keep you waiting next time." They also alerted Minister to the fact that they understood his duress signal by adding: "I know how *bloody* cold it gets down there. Good night and good luck!"

Minister was found in a Gestapo prison cell when the allies overran Holland. He was severely wounded from his beatings and almost dead from lack of nutrition. Yet, the Minister had contributed mightily to the war-effort. On the basis of his contact with that supply plane, two Nazi parachute divisions had stayed for months at the specified location on the coast on Denmark, waiting in vain for an invasion that never occurred (Ford 1945, 47-49).

Conclusion

These various missions and associated incidents reflect the caliber of candidate the OSS sought and the complexity of the job that the OSS A&S would eventually have to undertake. The A&S process, which tested a prospective agent for a series of complicated and interdependent qualifications, had to first determine what qualifications were necessary and then how to best assess and observe these qualifications considered so crucial for survival in this line of work. That survival necessitated that a prospective OSS candidate possess the ability to stay under cover in the most precarious of situations and act with determination even while under extreme enemy pressure.

What were these attributes or qualifications that a potential OSS operative must possess? How does a process reveal this about a prospective candidate? How the OSS

A&S staff attempted to organize, lay-out, and structure the A&S process in order to select “the right person” is explored in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

THE ASSESSMENT AND SELECTION

The plan for the SO representation. . . for the SO staffs with the U.S. Armies, and for the agents and JEDBURGHs in the areas where U.S. Armies will operate, depends exclusively on one thing: qualified personnel to carry it out.

Major Franklin Canfield, JEDBURGH Project Planning
Officer, SO Branch, OSS, August 1943, (Irwin 1991, 90)

What is the history behind the process of assessing and selecting personnel? How did the idea of using this process originate with the OSS staff? What were the initial challenges that the OSS Assessment and Selection (A&S) staff encountered in their development of the Assessment and Selection process? How was the assessment process conducted? How was the candidate eventually selected? These questions are explored in detail in this chapter.

Initial Recruitment and Training

The beginnings of the Office of Strategic Services Assessment and Selection (OSS A&S) process stemmed from a genuine need. During the OSS's first year of operation, a person usually entered the unit through one of three ways: recruitment of military personnel by the Personnel Procurement Branch, recruitment of civilians by the Civilian Personnel Branch, and recruitment of both military and civilian personnel throughout the initiative of individual OSS members. Unfortunately, the most critical recruitment process--the one for OSS operational personnel who would operate overseas and behind enemy lines--was conducted in a dangerously haphazard manner. At this time, no US agency knew what qualities made a good spy or effective saboteur, or, if they

did know, they had published no formal records of acceptable qualities and characteristics.

Personnel recruited for OSS duty were given instructions to report to some discreet location and wait there to receive further information. Once they arrived, many of the recruits were unable to figure out why they had been asked to come. Ironically, the OSS administrative office was just as confused. This notion is highlighted in an example relayed by R. Harris Smith in his book, *OSS: The Secret History of America's First Central Intelligence Agency*. Smith provides this insight: "Oftentimes, this new recruit would show up to the Washington address only to experience the OSS's brand of administrative confusion when asked 'Do you have any idea what the OSS might have hired you for?'" (Smith 1972, 5). Yet, many of these "forgotten" personnel were then immediately given orders to go overseas and perform the job of an operative working behind enemy lines--often with very little training or any attempt made by the OSS to match this person's skill set with a certain type of mission.

Gerald Schwab gave an example of this lack of training in his book *OSS Agents in Hitler's Heartland: Destination Innsbruck*. He relates the experiences of an OSS operative who was to be parachuted into Austria to conduct intelligence collection operations. The mission occurred--without the agent ever receiving any type of parachuting training. In their haste to infiltrate the operative and his team, the OSS cadre had forgotten to arrange even this most basic of training. For the neophyte operative, the ultra low-level jump from 500 feet, though successful, turned out to be his first and last

(Schwab 1996, 4-5). Due to examples like these, a sense of recklessness seemed to abound in the initial OSS recruiting and training effort.

The fact that prospective OSS personnel were being selected without the benefit of any professional or uniform screening process appeared to be a result of this calamitous recruiting effort. Personnel were selected for reasons ranging from being from a country that was on the OSS target list to having a relationship with Donovan. For example, J. P. Morgan's sons were in the OSS; a Vanderbilt was the executive officer of the Special Operations branch in Washington; a DuPont directed French espionage projects in Washington; an Archibald (Standard Oil) was an OSS security officer in Calcutta; a Ryan (Equitable Life Insurance) was the OSS intelligence reports chief in Italy (Smith 1972, 16). This posed some problems for the new organization, and it suffered immensely from these hastily executed recruitment drives. Essentially, the lack of a link between the person, the job description, and the mission scuttled many recruitment and employment efforts. While Donovan had been exposed to and impressed by many of the pursuits and practices of the British, he had missed a key piece of information: an assessment and training process conducted by the British Special Operations Executive (SOE).

The SOE was the British secret service responsible for subversion and sabotage behind enemy lines and understood that there was a certain human psyche, in addition to physical capacity, that was best suited for its type of work. They had developed a program that was based on their country's own War Officer Selection Boards (WOSB). It was the SOE's ability to put the right person in the right job that had made it so

successful in its operations. Part of the process of becoming an operative in the SOE was an assessment and training program that was conducted in a secluded country estate called Pemberley. It was here that the SOE attempted to develop a system that would incorporate the ideas of the German psychologist Max Simoneit with the “scientific, psychometric approach of American psychology” developed by Henry A. Murray (Morgan, 1957, 23).

Simoneit was a German psychologist who assisted the German Army in its attempt to rebuild after World War I. He was a proponent of using personality diagnosis to assist the army in selecting its officers and specialists for this new force. He believed in the principle that “there is a world of difference between what a man says he will do and what he actually does” (Morgan 1957, 22). Using this principle, he arrived at the conclusion that personality must be studied as a whole, and that the manner in which a person performs a task is much more important than the actual result (score). This conclusion greatly contradicted the quantitative-only techniques currently in use during this time period.

This numbers-only approach favored measuring a person’s ability through use of separate, scientifically measurable tests that examined the candidate for a particular ability or skill. After completion of these tests, the assessment staff collected the scores. These scores were then combined for an assessment of the person--thus the selection decision was made purely on quantitative data. This system was oriented to the end result, and not the process. How well a candidate person scored--and not how he performed--determined selection or rejection.

Simoneit believed that this quantitative approach was incapable of delivering the type of person truly needed to rebuild the German forces. He suggested using a process that combined the quantitative scores (looking for various patterns or skill interdependencies) and used tests that had no quantitative measure--something unheard of in the field of psychology at that time. He also favored input from a "test psychologist" in the form of a qualitative assessment of the candidate--also something unheard of at that time. This process, he felt, would lead to a more accurate description of the candidate and allow for a better decision with regard to selection or rejection (Ansbacher 1941, 589-592).

Simoneit also decided that the series of tests available to psychologists at this time were too narrow in scope, so he developed new ones. He introduced assessments that took place in situations replicating, as closely as possible, the war-like conditions that the officers and specialists would later experience. During testing, he would modify the intensity of the situation and record how the subjects progressed. His conclusions and new product developments became the foundation for further work by US psychologists, including Henry A. Murray (Ansbacher 1941, 589-592).

Murray, a distinguished Harvard psychologist, was part of the American psychological movement that had begun its personality assessment work independently, but incorporated German findings upon learning of discoveries made by Simoneit and his staff. Through his work in the 1920s and 1930s, Murray had developed a system that advocated using a series of multiple tests, both quantitative and qualitative, to assist him in obtaining information about a given subject. He also believed that, in order to render a

decision about the candidate's suitability for selection, it was necessary to integrate this information into a staff conference setting. This setting, attended by staff only, was a situation where presentations of the amassed quantitative and qualitative data could be conducted, their inter-relationships studied and expert consensus rendered about the data's meaning. This later proved to be an invaluable procedure for the OSS A&S staff. In academic circles it was quickly recognized that the work of Simoneit and Murray had established a baseline of psychological data and testing that would have a profound impact on the future of civilian and military psychological programs (Ansbacher 1941, 589-592).

The OSS's attempt, using Simoneit's and Murray's approaches, to develop a process that would psychologically and physically test a person and then select him for work in an organization, was the first of its kind in the history of the US military. The OSS's attempt was extremely novel for two reasons: (1) it attempted to use physical and psychological testing to determine a candidate's suitability to work within an organization, and (2) it also attempted to assess at what type of job a candidate would perform best, as well as his potential for success. This assessment and selection process produced numerous testing methods that would later be used by many military and civilian organizations that would follow the OSS. Yet the evolutionary history of assessment and selection needs to be explored in order to better understand what the OSS was about to undertake.

Functional Evolution: Early Assessment and Selection Methods

In the book *Personality and Prediction: Principles of Personality Assessment*, Jerry Wiggins describes the evolution of the concept of an assessment and selection program. He explores methods used by China, Germany, and Great Britain to illustrate the evolutionary process that had taken place prior to the development of the OSS A&S process. Through these examples, the assessment and selection factors that influenced many of the OSS A&S staff's decisions can be seen.

China

Assessment and selection testing had its roots in ancient practices. The Chinese employed, for that time, a fairly sophisticated program of testing and selection over 4,000 years ago. During that process, officials already in the employment of the civil service were administered oral exams once every third year to assess their performance in their present jobs or potential for promotion. Additionally, the Han Dynasty (206 BC to 220 AD) used a series of written civil service examinations to assess competence in such areas as civil law, military affairs, agriculture, revenue, and geography (Wiggins 1973, 515).

By the time that the Ming Dynasty came to power (1368-1644 AD), the civil service testing had advanced even further. An objective, multiple-stage selection program was in place and practiced on a nationwide scale. Initially, local testing centers oversaw the administration of a series of essay questions that were designed to identify candidates with the needed qualities. The Chinese evaluators defined success as the completion of the questions in a manner that would indicate that a person possessed the

qualities needed for civil service. Those identified as such would then be moved on for further testing. Usually only four percent of the initial candidates were selected for further testing. The next stage, advanced testing, was conducted in the provincial capital. Here, selected personnel were subjected to nine days and nights of essay-style examinations. These examinations stressed written expression and knowledge of classical Chinese works. Those selected from this group, approximately five percent, were then given examinations in China's capital. The three percent that finally passed this set of exams were now eligible for public office (Wiggins 1973, 516).

British diplomats who traveled to China during the earlier part of the nineteenth century knew about this Chinese system of testing to determine one's capability for civil service. The English East India Company introduced a modified version of the competitive exam process for the purpose of selecting trainees for overseas duty. In 1855, a system using competitive exams was developed for use in the British Civil Service, and in 1883, the US established the US Civil Service Commission for the administration of competitive examinations in certain departments of the government (Wiggins 1973, 516).

The Chinese version of the assessment process tended to view the subject as the sum of isolated abilities (i.e., knowledge of the classics or mathematical processes), and did not allow for an evaluation of the total personality. Though fairly well developed for its time, the process would be improved upon by other nations. A future assessment program that would eventually provide an examination of the total personality would

later be developed from an identified need linked to a strategic failure--thus the German approach.

Germany

The defeat in World War I initiated within the German Army a desire to reappraise the way in which it was utilized. The German psychologist Simoneit attributed the disappointing performance of German soldiers to: poor emotional adjustment to life at the battlefield; improper indoctrination concerning the purpose of war, and an inefficient utilization of available manpower. He went on to suggest that this type of situation could have been avoided through the use of a comprehensive psychological assessment procedure. This procedure would be followed by an ideological indoctrination concerning the nature and purpose of the war that was being waged. As a result of Simoneit's accusations, the German military command established a process for the assessment and selection of officers and specialists. By 1936, Germany had fifteen army psychological factories, in which eighty-four military psychologists processed over forty thousand candidates a year (Wiggins 1973, 516).

Under Simoneit's direction, German military psychological programs took their starting point from the dictum that the one's personality must be studied as a whole. This assessment of the total person was to be conducted in the context in which the person was expected to perform his assigned job. The Germans attempted to accomplish this through the use of small groups, consisting of four or five candidates, that were to be assessed intensively for a period of approximately two and one-half days. Though the more traditional psychological measuring instruments were indeed used (such as biographical

data, intelligence tests, and vocational-interest tests), the assessment staff placed a majority of its emphasis on the behavior they observed in interviews, performance of specified tasks, and numerous, varied realistic situational tests. A person's speech, handwriting, and facial expressions observed during the conduct of these various tests were examined very closely (Anshbacher 1941, 589).

Within this framework of tests, German psychologists began to observe that previously held psychological beliefs concerning the distinctions between abilities and character traits were invalid. The German psychological concept of "practical disposition" now replaced the previously adhered to one of "pure intellect." Practical disposition was measured through the observation of the reactions of candidates to a variety of performance tasks and realistic situational tests (Wiggins 1973, 517).

The performance tasks were used as both a source of objective test data and an occasion to observe the expressive behavior of the candidate. In one example, the candidate was required to pull apart an expanding spring-loaded exerciser. Unknown to the candidate, the exerciser emitted increasing levels of electrical current as it was pulled. The subject's facial expressions were recorded via hidden camera, and a team of assessors observed his general behavior. Simoneit believed that these recorded facial data would provide some insight into previously obtained quantitative and qualitative data (Wiggins, 1973, 517).

The situational reaction tests were structured in such a manner that the candidate would demonstrate his level of resourcefulness, imagination, persistence, leadership, and capacity to perform under stress. One of these tests required the candidate to plan and

supervise the construction of a bridge. The candidate was provided with all the necessary materials to construct the bridge: a small group of men, ladders, ropes, etc. Then, a team of officers and psychologists observed and assessed his direction of the project (Wiggins 1973, 517).

An assessment board then evaluated the observational, psychological, and biographical data that had been gathered during this two and a half-day assessment. This board consisted of an army officer (usually a colonel), a medical officer, and three psychologists who, after reviewing the data, made a recommendation to the commanding officer. The commanding officer was vested with the authority to make the final decision concerning the suitability of candidates (Wiggins, 1973, 517).

Thus the German process directed by Simoneit, in contrast to the Chinese one, did not view the candidate as the sum of some identified isolated abilities, but rather as a "total personality" whose potential must be assessed in realistic situations. These situations would be simulations of the environments in which the subject would be expected to perform. Thus the assessment and selection process had taken another step forward.

Great Britain

Prior to World War II, the process of officer selection in the British Army was based almost solely on the opinions of interview boards, which were often influenced to a great measure by considerations of social class. An example follows:

The selection committee would ask briskly, "What school were you at?" and would be told Harrow, Haileybury, or Rugby, as the case might be. "What games do you play?" would be the next and invariable question. A promising candidate would reply, "I have played tennis for England, cricket for Yorkshire,

rugby for the Harlequins, and fives for Winchester.” The next question would then be “Do you play polo?”--just to prevent the candidate’s thinking too highly of himself. Even without playing polo, however, he was evidently worth serious consideration. Little time, by contrast, was wasted on the man who admitted to having been educated at Wigglesworth. “Where?” the chairman would ask in astonishment, and “Where’s that?” after the name had been repeated. “Oh in Lancashire!” he would say at last. Just for a matter of form, some member might ask, “What games do you play?” But the reply, “Table tennis for Wigan, cycling for Blackpool, and snooker for Wigglesworth” would finally delete his name from the list. There might even be some muttered comment upon people who deliberately wasted the committee’s time. (Wiggins, 1973, 518)

By 1941 the wartime demands for officers far exceeded the supply of candidates with the typically required social background. It became increasingly apparent that the traditional procedures for officer selection would no longer suffice, for that system was both inequitable and inefficient (Wiggins, 1973, 518).

War Officer Selection Boards were created in the summer of 1942 to alleviate the crisis that had been created by the failure of the traditional boards and their methods of selection. The procedures used by WOSBs were patterned after those used by the German psychologists. Groups of eight to ten men were studied intensively over a two-to three-day period. An assessment staff consisting of military testing officers, a psychiatrist, several psychologists, and the board president (a full colonel) conducted the study. The subjects were given a series of tests that included objective tests of abilities, self-report questionnaires, and projective tests. Emphasis was placed on the interviews and on the observation of expressive behaviors in situational tests. These situational tests were not as complicated as those devised by the Germans, yet still attempted to simulate common social situations that might be encountered in British army life (Wiggins 1973, 519).

This WOSB process was a marked improvement from the previously used officer selection methods, and its procedures and results were reported as clearly superior to those of the older boards (Wiggins 1973, 519). These procedures dramatically increased the selection of those deemed the "right type of officer." Additionally, they assisted the board in turning away personnel who could not perform the required tasks, despite having the "proper social qualifications," and who under the old system would have been allowed to enter the service as an officer.

OSS Assessment and Selection

Initiation

In the fall of 1943, an OSS official visited a WOSB unit in England and viewed the training. It seemed to be delivering tremendous results, and he believed that it could have application to OSS-conducted operations. Upon his return, this official proposed to Donovan that some of the WOSB procedures be adopted for use in the selection of potential OSS personnel. Donovan, along with Robert C. Tyron, a psychologist on leave from the University of California and a member of the OSS, directed that a report of the assessment process be done and given to him within fifteen days. This proposal was enthusiastically supported by Colonel John Hoag and Colonel Henson Robinson, both members of the OSS's Schools and Training Department, whose training programs had borne the brunt of too many cases of poorly-conducted recruitment efforts (Wiggins 1973, 520).

After reviewing the requested report and agreeing with the findings, Donovan issued an order authorizing the establishment of an Assessment and Selection (A&S)

process for the OSS in October 1943. He desired a program that would have a meticulous process to test a prospective member's suitability, both mentally and physically, before allowing that person to undergo additional OSS training and service in the unit. He also wanted a program that produced OSS personnel better able to execute strategically sensitive missions. Donovan, along with Major Franklin Canfield, quoted at the beginning of this chapter, understood that the right type of person must be chosen to carry out OSS overseas, behind-the-lines missions.

For a majority of OSS assignments, the success or failure of a mission depended on the individual or individuals selected to execute the particular task, rather than on a piece of equipment. Thus, the task of selecting the right person to conduct these types of missions was a particularly daunting one. For the OSS, this point had been reinforced numerous times in the past by the haphazard recruitment procedures used prior to the institution of the A&S program. Yet, of even greater concern to Donovan and the JCS was finding a procedure that alleviated the damage done to the strategic war effort as a result of security breaches, poor rapport with resistance forces, or decreased morale for OSS forces isolated far away from home (Wiggin, 1973, 520). The decision to implement the OSS A&S process would have consequences beyond anything that Donovan could have ever imagined.

In November 1943, a location for the newly-approved assessment process had been acquired and work began immediately. The newly appointed A&S staff was extremely diverse. It:

consisted of psychologists of various persuasions, animal psychologists, social psychologists, sociologists and cultural anthropologists, psychiatrists who

had practiced psychoanalysis...as well as psychiatrists who were unacquainted with, or opposed to psychoanalysis--these diverse specialists, men and women accustomed to much free thinking, recruited from a dozen states, were able to work together enthusiastically, harmoniously and effectively. (Fiske 1947, 26).

This staff carried out the task of assessment and selection at Station S physical plant, which was located at the Willard Estate in Fairfax, Virginia, approximately eighteen miles from downtown Washington. The Willard Estate became known by code-name Station S, so tagged for the *secret* work that was to be conducted there. Later, when the flow of potential OSS candidates became too heavy for one assessment site to handle, the OSS established an additional center, also in Washington. It was known as Station W-- for Washington. Shortly after this, a station was set up in California for recruits from the West Coast; it was known as WS, a combination of *Washington* and *secret*. Before the war was over, assessments had also been conducted in China, Korea, and India. These centers outside the continental United States were devised for foreign recruits that the OSS began using later in the war. However, most of the assessments took place at Station S and Station W. It was here that the OSS assessed a total of 5,391 candidates during the last twenty months of the war (Wiggins, 1973, 520).

A&S Goal, Objectives and Strategy Development

The OSS conducted the assessment and selection process with a specific goal in mind. As stated by the A&S staff, this goal aimed to "reveal the personalities of OSS recruits to the extent of providing ground for sufficiently reliable predictions of their usefulness to the organization during the remaining years of the war" (Fiske 1947, 8). In order to accomplish this goal, the OSS A&S staff made Donovan's desires its objectives.

The A&S process would test a prospective member's mental and physical suitability before allowing that person to join the unit and undergo additional OSS training, and it would provide the OSS with personnel better able to execute strategically-sensitive missions. In order to accomplish this, the OSS A&S staff knew that they now needed to develop a strategy that would foster the accomplishment of the stated objectives and goal.

In their search for an A&S strategy, the OSS staff began by determining a structure for the process. One of the biggest immediate constraints that the OSS A&S staff faced was a scarcity of time. The OSS needed operatives immediately. Due to the limited time that was available to them for assessing and selecting candidates, they initially decided upon the use of a three and one-half day "living-in" assessment combined with WOSB procedures. This process would be conducted at an A&S site (S, W or WS) and would begin with an in-processing of the candidates, who had been recruited by the Special Operations (SO), Secret Intelligence (SI), and the Operational Group (OG) portions of the OSS, in groups of eighteen. After the three-day exercise and the deliberations of the diagnostic council, which was set up in a manner similar to that used by the WOSB, the eighteen individuals would either be accepted or rejected for further training (Wiggins 1973, 520).

With the understanding of the time that they had at their disposal, the OSS A&S staff decided to approach the task of structuring the assessment and selection through use of the holistic philosophy of assessment. The holistic approach emphasizes the assessment of the total person within the environmental context, both situational and functional, within which he is expected to perform. Thus, the OSS staff decided that their

process would consist of selecting an individual within the context of existing decision and theory models favored by the Simoneit and Murray approaches. Now the OSS A&S staff needed to fill in the details of this three-day program that would accomplish the stated A&S goal. This was especially challenging considering that the work of the OSS mandated that:

It was necessary that hundreds of special skills outside the sphere of civilian experience be learned rapidly by thousands of Americans. . . . And these novel skills, taught by men who had mastered them but recently, had to be put into practice in some of the most inaccessible, least known, and outlandish parts of this broad earth. (Fiske 1947, 10)

The type of work conducted by OSS operatives was considerably different than that assessed for by the WOSB process and the task of foretelling how successful or unsuccessful a candidate might be at his job was not one that the WOSB desired to attempt. Thus, using many of the events from the WOSB process was not feasible. Additionally, the OSS combination of operations and intelligence work, as opposed to the operations only focus of the SOE, made using a copy of the SOE process impractical. The OSS's A&S staff determined that it needed to develop a three-day program that was predictive in nature, that is, capable of predicting whether or not the candidate would work well for the organization, and how successful that person might actually be.

Using this thought process, the A&S staff finally arrived at a conclusion. To accomplish the goal of revealing candidates' personalities in order to allow for sufficiently reliable predictions, the A&S staff adopted the strategy of "eliminating the unfit" (Fiske 1947, 9). This strategy attempted to balance the selection of personnel, based on the total person assessment, with constant need for "bodies" to fill especially

critical OSS assignments (Wiggins 1973, 521). In essence, the OSS A&S staff could afford to be particular about the personnel it eventually selected, but not to the point of not choosing anyone, because there was a war to fight and bodies were needed.

The A&S staff's approach was comprised of many aspects that made it truly unique, and the problem, confronted by the OSS A&S staff, of establishing assessment criteria for this large an undertaking was enormous. First, the A&S staff realized that they were working in an inexact science and saw their task as "the scientific art of arriving at sufficient conclusions from insufficient data" (Fiske 1947, 8). Additionally, the staff believed that they could achieve Donovan's desires by eliminating some candidates in the recruited manpower pool and by properly placing others (Fiske 1947, 8). They believed that this would result in a decrease in failures and an increase in successes for the OSS.

Second, given the wartime environment, the staff desired to show Donovan that the money used to finance this venture and the time allotted to conduct it would be well spent. To accomplish this, the A&S staff further defined their strategy development so it would show that the decrease in mission failures and increase in mission successes could be accomplished by such a factor that the *amount saved* plus the *amount of harm* prevented plus the *amount gained* is greater than the cost of the assessment program (Fiske 1947, 9).

The *amount saved* was calculated by the staff as the average expenditure of money and time spent by the organization in training, transporting, housing, and dealing with an individual, who in the end proves to be worthless to the organization in the proper

conduct of designated missions. The *amount of harm* consisted of the impairment of efficiency and morale and the possible injury to the OSS effort that might result from the actions of a person who is arrogant, apathetic, complacent, or insulting when dealing with members of his own unit, those of other allied services, or citizens of foreign countries. This also included the damage that might occur due to a person's all too zealous desire to share information with those not authorized to receive it.

The *amount gained* was defined as the "average difference between the positive accomplishments of a failure and of a success" (Fiske 1947, 9). In the opinion of the A&S staff, an assignment filled by an unsatisfactory individual deprived the OSS of the services offered by a person who might be capable of making a positive contribution. In summation they stated that "... every pronounced failure costs the organization a good deal of time and money, lowers the efficiency and reputation of one of its units, and, by taking the place of a competent man, prevents the attainment of certain goals" (Fiske 1947, 9). Thus the challenge for the OSS assessment staff was to develop initial criteria, later termed desired qualifications, and events to fit its desired strategy and endstate.

Criteria Development: Challenges, Conditions and Desired Qualifications

Challenges

The first challenge for criteria development centered on the acknowledgement of the situations that differentiated the OSS A&S staff's endeavors from those of most other selection programs. These were identified as situational novelties. Among these differences were the variety and novelty of the situations that OSS operatives often experienced, and it was critical that the assessment staff define and understand these. For

example, it was necessary that the OSS A&S staff have an understanding and appreciation of the living conditions of a OSS resistance leader in France, the special problems confronted by an operative in Yugoslavia, or the demoralizing effects of malaria in Burma. This understanding would assist in determining the type of geographical, terrain, or population specific emphasis that might be placed on the individualized portion of the soon-to-be developed program. However, this information was almost impossible for the OSS A&S staff to obtain, and when this type of information did arrive, it was extremely skimpy on details. For example:

Many of the operations were still in the planning phase; others were being carried out behind enemy lines outside the range of witnesses, and even at the most advanced bases the officer in charge was often for long periods of time uncertain as to what his men were doing out there in the unknown. It was sometimes months before enough knowledge was accumulated to form the basis of a report that could be hurried back through the channels to the United States. Rarely were the details in any series of reports sufficient to give the officers in Washington vivid concrete pictures of the real circumstances in this or that OSS installation overseas. (Fiske 1947, 9)

Thus, the OSS staff was forced to proceed in the development of their A&S program using its assumptions concerning the nature of the operational environments that they believed the OSS operative would encounter.

The next challenge confronting the OSS A&S staff in the development of the A&S criteria was the lack of a job description for the potential OSS operative. The OSS A&S staff understood that the development of the A&S criteria should be a result of an understanding of what the personnel would be doing (i.e., a job description). It was this description that the assessment staff desperately needed in order to facilitate focus and design of the A&S process. As critical as job descriptions were to the assessment

process, they, like the situational novelties mentioned previously, were very hard to understand. Many of the OSS missions were planned, organized, and coordinated under the strictest secrecy, and few of the overseas OSS offices cared very much about taking the time to write out the job description required for the mission. They were happy to provide mission profiles, but not the job description. Nevertheless, it was these descriptions that the A&S staff so desperately needed. Thus, job descriptions were obtained through reading the mission profile packets and formulating assumptions about the important factors. However, these assumptions often were flawed.

Once requested for use in the OSS A&S program, the mission profiles were eventually transmitted to the administrative offices in Washington DC. Here, administrative personnel, unfamiliar with field operations activities, received these communiqués. These office personnel would then attempt to assist the assessment staff--who was even more unfamiliar with field operations--in making assumptions about the important factors. The following is an example of what the administrative personnel passed along to the OSS staff:

The organization has been recruiting too many men, civilian and military, who have intelligence and sometimes the necessary mechanical training but who lack common sense, know nothing about working with men or how to look after the welfare and the morale of the men under them. We simply must have men who can shoulder the responsibility and use initiative with common sense. Simply because a man has intelligence does not qualify him for this type of work. In some instances we also have had men who fall into the class of the high-strung or emotional type. We simply cannot use men of that type in the field when they have to live with the Chinese, eat Chinese food, and be under pressure at times. In most cases these men have suffered nervous breakdowns and other nervous ailments. . . . We have had at least eight men, who for various quirks in their make-up, have had to be pulled from the field. Some of them could have been used at headquarters and should never have been sent to the field, and others

simply wouldn't fit anywhere. One was definitely a psychiatric case. (Fiske 1947, 13).

This was, by no means, considered an adequate job description, and only in a very few instances was the OSS A&S staff provided with what could be considered material that would qualify for a job description. Often, though, this type of information was the best that the OSS A&S staff had to work with.

Although these challenges, that of situational novelty and lack of job descriptions, were probably the most dubious for the OSS A&S staff to attempt to solve, there were also other conditions that would factor into their ability to determine criteria for this A&S process. Among these, only a few are mentioned here. Those that bear mentioning are: the impossibility of testing all the special abilities needed by OSS operatives, the differences between the job to be assigned in relation to the one for which the candidate had been assessed, the variations in the candidates' states of health, and the decision for the candidate's identity to remain hidden from the OSS A&S staff.

Conditions

The first condition concerned the impossibility of testing all the special abilities needed by OSS operatives. Testing for this diversity of abilities needed to conduct OSS missions, as assumed by the OSS staff after reading the provided job description material, presented the OSS A&S staff with a problem that appeared almost impossible to solve--the impossibility of testing for all the required abilities. This diversity necessitated that the OSS A&S program contain a number of tests that would examine the candidate's ability to observe, remember, report, instruct, analyze, improvise, recruit, and so forth.

Unlike skill tests used for personnel assigned to US Army communications units, such as the Morse Code test for code speed and mechanical comprehension, there existed no tests for the previously mentioned abilities. Thus, it was incumbent on the OSS A&S staff to devise testing methods that were able to assess numerous abilities, including: calculating enemy vulnerabilities, exhibiting a willingness to participate in parachuting, interacting with foreign resistance leaders, and acting in a self-collected manner if caught in the act of spying (Fiske 1947, 16).

The second condition dealt with the differences between the job to be assigned in relation to the one for which the candidate had been assessed. During its existence, the OSS A&S program was expected to judge the suitability of each recruit to perform a selected assignment. However, it was inevitable that personnel would be assessed against one type of requested job profile, and then, upon arrival into the theater of operations, be expected to accomplish a completely different one. This proved problematic for the theater staff, who now had no idea about how the newly arrived operative would perform in his new job. This change in job assignment also prevented the OSS A&S staff from giving an effective evaluation of the success of their assessment and selection process (Fiske 1947, 16).

The third condition concerned the variations in the candidates' states of health. The OSS A&S staff determined that some recruits were certain to arrive at the OSS A&S process in peak physical and mental health. Others would arrive with a cold, malnourished, emotionally drained, or simply out of shape. These factors, though often temporary in nature, were so varying in their effects on the process that the OSS staff

attempted to outline what corrections should be made for them. However, this objective caused so many problems that the OSS staff elected not to insert this into the A&S program, choosing instead to simply list it as an uncontrollable condition (Fiske 1947, 20).

The last condition to be discussed here was the decision for the candidate's identity to remain hidden from the OSS A&S staff. Donovan, along with the OSS A&S staff, had decided that for security reasons the identity of the personnel to be assessed would be unknown to fellow candidates. This meant that name, rank, family information, vocational background, etc. would not be revealed or discussed while the candidate was in the A&S program. Additionally, candidates would wear a common uniform at all times while in the program. According to the A&S staff, this practice "opened the way for some otherwise unworkable procedures and facilitated the creation of a convivial atmosphere, in other ways it augmented the difficulties of assessment" (Fiske 1947, 21).

This process initially withheld from the A&S staff some of the information that is often considered necessary in judging a person's character. These informational nuggets can be gleaned from the way a man wears his clothes, the color or pattern of his ties, the presence or absence of monograms on clothing, and so on. Sometimes, the candidates were allowed to wear their own socks and shoes, and these items, the sole indicators of a man's taste and possible social status, received considerable attention from the OSS A&S staff--a group extremely eager for any scrap of information (Fiske 1947, 21).

This stripped-down condition did possess some noted advantages. It allowed for the observation of an individual divested of all symbols of authority and station in life.

This provided an opportunity for observation of personnel who, stripped of rank, appeared insecure without the very support mechanisms upon which some of their confidence was based. Conversely, the A&S staff was able to observe those personnel who appeared to act differently from what the staff assumed was their manner in real life. For example, consider a fairly successful, civilian, mid-level manager who was drafted at the age of thirty-five, and was now wearing the stripes of an army infantry private. He had been conditioned to take orders and not make waves within his new organization. Yet, at the assessment station, the man, now rid of his uniform and low rank, appeared to exhibit the dormant qualities that had made him a success in the civilian world. Thus, mandating the wearing of a common uniform allowed for the concealment, if not the obliteration, of the powerful effects of rank differences (Fiske 1947, 22).

After struggling with and obtaining some limited understanding of the above challenges and conditions, the OSS staff was able to finally develop criteria for use in the A&S process. They did so by concluding that their lack of specific knowledge concerning the situational novelty and job descriptions, in addition to the other mentioned conditions, necessitated that assessments could not truly be made for specific skills. Rather, this assessment needed to be an assessment of the man as a whole using the conditions (as the OSS A&S staff believed them to be) for OSS work (MacKinnon 1991, 2).

Desired Qualifications

Thus, the problem of developing criteria would center on turning these challenges and conditions of OSS work into measurable qualifications. The A&S staff accomplished

this by accepting abilities or variables that they could use for measure and by determining that these were “the next best thing to job descriptions” (Wiggins 1973, 523). These variables, later called qualifications, would become the criteria used for the assessment and selection. Initially the OSS A&S staff had twenty of these qualifications that it deemed important for use in the A&S process. The OSS A&S staff later considered the list to be too large, worked for five months, and finally trimmed the number down to ten.

These final ten qualifications were then further subdivided into common and special instance categories. The common qualifications were those that were considered necessary for the conduct of most OSS overseas activities. The common qualifications were:

- a. Motivation for assignment: war morale, interest in proposed assignment.
- b. Energy and Initiative: activity level, zest, effort, initiative.
- c. Effective Intelligence: ability to select strategic goals and the most efficient means of attaining them; speed and accuracy of judgment; resourceful in solving problems; originality; good judgement in dealing with things, people or ideas.
- d. Emotional Stability: ability to govern self in disturbing emotions; maturity, steadiness and endurance under pressure; snafu tolerance, and freedom from neurotic tendencies.
- e. Social Relations: ability to get along with others; social awareness; good will; teamwork; tact; freedom from disturbing prejudices; freedom from annoying traits.
- f. Leadership: social initiative; organizing ability; ability to evoke cooperation; acceptance of responsibility.
- g. Security: ability to keep secrets; caution; discretion; ability to bluff and to mislead.
- h. Physical Ability: agility, daring ruggedness, stamina. (Fiske 1947, 30-31)

Distinguished from these were the special-instance qualifications. These were those qualifications considered necessary only for certain types of assignments, and a prospective candidate’s possible assignment to the Secret Intelligence (SI) branch was one of these instances. The OSS A&S staff concluded that the ability to search, question,

observe, and recall would be of considerable importance to these candidates. Therefore, the remaining qualifications that needed to be assessed were listed as:

- a. Observing and Reporting: ability to search, question, and to remember accurately significant facts and their relations; ability to evaluate information and to report succinctly and infer.
- b. Propaganda Abilities: ability to perceive the psychological vulnerabilities of the enemy; to devise subversive techniques of one sort or another; to speak, write or draw persuasively. (Fiske 1947, 31)

Besides the qualifications listed above, there were additional abilities (teaching, recruiting, etc.) that were measured in very special cases and were used when observing a candidate's personality or actions, but were not included in the formal list of desired qualifications. This was due to the fact that often these variables were too specific (and only important to a few jobs that the OSS staff truly understood the requirements for) or because they were not readily measurable in all candidates under the conditions established at the A&S sites. Additionally, during the last three months of the twenty months of service, the A&S staff assessed the suitability of every candidate for each of the three locations in theater (relative to the Eastern, Western or Pacific theaters of operations) (Fiske 1947, 31).

With the establishment of the criteria, known as qualifications, finally completed, the OSS A&S staff now attempted to determine how each of these qualifications would be assessed in the individual candidate. Given the holistic approach that had been decided upon for the assessment process, the implementation of this decision would take some thought. The holistic assessment approach typically employs a large number of data collection procedures and assessors, and often requires an inordinate amount of time.

Time was one resource that the OSS A&S staff did not have, and a large number of data collection procedures that sequentially tested for the desired qualifications would dictate a large portion for this finite resource. In a compromise, agreed upon in order to save on assessment time, the A&S staff proposed the adoption of thirty-five different assessment procedures, almost all of which would permit the measurement of two to four variables simultaneously. Thus, it would be possible to assess each major qualification through a variety of tests and to complete this during the three and a half-day process. For example, the qualification of *social relations* was assessed through use of: interviews, individual task questionnaires, informal observations, formal observations conducted as group task tests, projective tests, and sociometric questionnaires, most of which would be completed by the second day (Fiske 1947, 31).

After establishing the criteria and the means to test for qualifications in a prospective candidate, the OSS A&S staff then developed a scale from which to rate or grade the candidates. Each qualification was rated on a scale that was composed of six points: Very Superior, Superior, High Average, Low Average, Inferior, and Very Inferior (Fiske 1947, 32). No rating point of *Average* was developed, in order to force a spread of the ratings and allow for a clearer picture of the candidate being assessed. If any of the desired qualifications were not measured, this was so indicated in the candidate's final report. With this final step in place, the A&S process was structured and the staff was ready to begin receiving candidates.

The A&S Program

A person judged as possible OSS material, whether through records screening for desired technical skills or by a personal reference from an incumbent OSS member, was usually interviewed initially at the candidate's place of business. Upon successful completion of this meeting, he was ordered to report to OSS headquarters in Washington. Once it was determined that the candidate would be serving with the SI, SO, or OG branches of the OSS, a representative of his designated branch would interview him. If the interviewer considered the candidate suitable, the candidate received instructions to proceed to another destination, which was the assessment school. The candidate also learned that he was to attend the school in a manner that would provide for complete anonymity and, therefore, he was not to reveal to anyone at the school any true details about himself, including name, vocation, rank, or family background. In order to ensure this, candidates donned a set of Army fatigues and turned in all personal belongings, except their shoes, which they were allowed to keep in some instances (Fiske 1947, 21). Thus the candidates were now prepared to depart, under assumed names and with common clothing, for the assessment location (Wiggins 1973, 526).

The candidate was ordered to reveal to the provider of transportation only the address of his destination. He was also instructed to refrain from any talk concerning the nature of his visit to this location, as the OSS was operating under the highest level of secrecy--or so the candidate was told. Yet even the OSS was not immune from the compromise of its secrets. An example, as related by Colonel Aaron Bank in his book

From OSS to Green Beret, highlights the fact that, no matter how hard it tried, even the OSS could not prevent some knowledge of its operations.

Whatever I would learn about OSS or see or hear concerning it was to be kept secret. The duty officer then directed me to report immediately to the Congressional Country Club. I started to ask questions on what sort of assignments were dished out and what the outfit did, but he was noncommittal.

"You'll get all that in your briefing and training," he told me.

While I was gathering my gear and waiting for a taxi, I pondered over the type of missions OSS probably performed. Intelligence gathering, behind-the-lines raids, and long-range patrolling seemed possible, but the Army already had Rangers that handled such activities. Perhaps it was a super-Ranger setup, but that just didn't make sense.

Finally the cab arrived. I piled in with my gear and told the cabbie, "Congressional Country Club, please."

"What?" he said, turning his head and gazing at me. "Not another one of those guerrillas!"

What's all this crap about being so secret? Even the cabbies know all about it, I muttered to myself (Bank 1986, 3).

Arrival and First Half Day of A&S

Upon arrival at the assessment site, the prospective candidate and the seventeen other candidates who would undergo the three and one-half day process with him were welcomed by the A&S director. Then an A&S staff member took each candidate for a short orientation walk, during which he reminded each to adhere to the instructions received at the OSS headquarters interview. Those instructions concerned the use of a false name and false biographical data. The candidates had been told to develop a cover story to ensure that the true details about their lives remained hidden. Additionally, they were advised to develop their story in enough detail to allow for a defense of it in the event that they were challenged about its authenticity. The candidates were instructed to use this story at all times when speaking to others during their three-day stay. They were

told that there was one exception to the above stated rule. The true details of one's life could be revealed when approached and questioned by an A&S staff member under the conditions termed "X." It was during "X" conditions that they were to answer all questions honestly and not in relation to their assumed identity (Fiske 1947, 65-67).

During the remainder of the first half-day and well into the evening, the candidates were kept extremely busy. They were administered a series of tests that concentrated on intelligence and personality. The two tests that measured intellectual ability were the *Otis Self-administering Test of Ability* and a vocabulary test, plus two special aptitude tests, the *Bennett Mechanical Comprehension Test* and the *Signal Corps Code Aptitude Test*. Consistent with the Simoneit and Murray approaches, the OSS A&S staff was not as interested in the score achieved by the candidates as they were in the way in which the candidate used whatever intelligence he had. The personality tests consisted of the personal history form, a projective questionnaire in the form of a sentence completion test, a health questionnaire, and a *Work Conditions Survey*. The *Work Conditions Survey* described forty-three conditions that the candidates rated on a six-point scale, from work conditions that were agreeable to the candidate (highly desirable) to ones that the candidate said would be unbearable (would make job impossible) (MacKinnon 1991, 4).

The projective test, in the form of the *Sentence Completion Test*, bears further explanation. The purpose of this test was to entice the OSS candidates into revealing information about themselves without becoming aware of the fact that they were doing so. Tests using projective technique methods attempt to stimulate the imaginative

process and facilitate expression in written word, verbal statement, or action. This is accomplished through the use of ambiguous material that forces the subject to respond through completion, interpretation, association, or explanation. The candidate attempts to deliver responses that are logical or reasonably related to the presented stimuli, but since the test is disguised, the candidate unknowingly reveals aspects of himself. Through the construction of the answers, it is possible to derive knowledge of the candidate's fears, wishes, sentiments, and attitudes.

In the OSS A&S process, the ambiguous material employed in the *Sentence Completion Test* consisted of the beginnings of a hundred sentences, and the candidates were given the task of completing them as fast as possible. The test was split into two parts, fifty questions each, with a break in between each part. This break was inserted to limit fatigue's influence on the answers that the candidate provided. Responding under pressure, including lack of time, the OSS A&S staff found that a candidate often revealed a large portion of his personality that, absent this test, may have been inhibited or missed (Fiske 1947, 71).

The test attempted to assess the areas of personality that included: family, past, inner states, goals and reaction to failure. There were no right or wrong answers and no "single word or group of words was better than any other except in so far as it might reveal more of the person who had written it" (Fiske 1947, 72). The sentences either referred to the candidate, such as "I admire. . ." or to another person, such as "Bill was happiest when. . ." (Fiske 1947, 72). The majority of the sentences used references to another person because the A&S staff presumed that when referring to another person, a

candidate was very likely to unknowingly reveal a large part of his own personality (Fiske 1947, 72).

The placement of these two types of tests on this evening had one purpose--the gathering of information which would assist the A&S staff members in preparing for their future interviews with the candidates. The staff found that the benefit of an interview with a candidate greatly increased if the interviewer was well prepared before meeting the individual. According to the A&S staff, there are many aspects of a person's life that he does not hesitate to reveal if asked for in a written format. Yet, often due to lack of time or hesitancy on the part of the individual to open up, these very same details may not be garnered during a verbal questioning. More importantly, these personality questionnaires enabled the interviewer to focus on the suspected problem areas and enter the interview knowing the type of personality with whom he was about to deal. This allowed the interviewer to structure the interview so as to glean the greatest amount of relevant information about the candidate.

After this battery of written tests, the candidates were escorted to a room that contained a bed and table on which articles of clothing, written materials, ticket receipts, etc. were found. The candidates, though unknown to them, were about to undergo the *Belongings Test*. They were then instructed to examine the belongings of a hypothetical occupant and were given just four minutes to do so. After the four minutes had elapsed, the candidates were then taken to another room and individually questioned about the belongings that they had just inspected. Questions were contained in a 36-item questionnaire and the candidate was directed not to answer any question for which he had

no evidence. The OSS A&S staff structured this task to test the candidate's ability to observe and draw correct conclusions, and to force the candidate to indicate the clues or evidence which led him to each conclusion, thus allowing them to observe the candidate's thought process (Fiske 1947, 92-93).

This was the last event for the evening. The candidate's work ended at midnight. Though this appeared to be an extremely tedious first few hours to the candidates, to the OSS A&S staff they were invaluable. These beginning hours yielded an enormous amount of desperately needed information from which the OSS A&S staff could now begin to build a picture of each individual and establish a baseline in their attempt to assess the whole man. Additionally, this acted as a means to dissolve the tension that appeared initially between the candidates and served as a morale builder, as many of the candidates later claimed to have been impressed by the intense schedule of the first half-day (Fiske 1947, 93).

First Full Day of A&S

After a 7:30 a.m. breakfast, the first full day of the assessment began. It started with an announcement from an A&S staff member that the candidates would be tested on their abilities to observe the terrain of the A&S site, and from these observations they would be required to comment on the history of the site. This was known as the *Terrain Test*. To the relief of the candidates, it was announced that this test would be administered on the second day of the assessment. To assist the candidates, the A&S staff distributed maps of the site. They also informed the candidates that they were free to make notes about the site, but that at exam time none of these resources could be used.

They were also instructed to determine what every lettered object on the map represented and to orient the buildings on the site to the points of a compass. This assignment, the candidates were informed, was to be accomplished during their free time and would be done as an individual event (Fiske 1947, 94).

After the announcement, the candidates were assigned to attend a personal interview or one of the day's three situational tests. The core of the assessment program was this detailed life-history personal interview that was conducted by one of the OSS A&S senior staff members. In order to prepare for the interview, the interviewer read the personal history form that the candidate had filled out previously. This, in addition to the sentence completion test, the health questionnaire, and the work conditions survey, prepared the interviewer to ask the candidate a wide range of informed questions concerning life history, likes and dislikes, etc. This interview also allowed the A&S staff to focus on and clarify any perceived inconsistencies that had arisen as a result of the candidate's answers to the previously mentioned tests. The interview event was conducted under "X" conditions and was extremely beneficial to the A&S staff, as it provided them a chance to clear up any questions, present then or to be posed later, about the candidate's personality.

The three situational tests were the *Brook*, the *Wall*, and the *Construction* tests. The *Brook* and the *Wall* events were leaderless-group, problem-solving tests that were designed to provide a realistic situation in which the variables of *effective intelligence*, *social relations*, *leadership*, *energy and initiative*, and *physical ability* could be observed, assessed, and rated by a three-person A&S staff. Both the *Brook* and the *Wall* stations

were allocated one hour for conduct of the event. In the execution of the *Brook* problem, a group of six candidates was taken to a brook that ran through the A&S site. Here candidates encountered a shallow stream whose banks were approximately eight feet apart. On one of the banks was a log; on the other side a heavy rock was visible. A number of boards, none of them individually long enough to reach the other side, were scattered around on the bank where the six-man group stood. Additionally, located with the boards were three lengths of rope, a pulley, and a barrel that had both of its ends removed. The candidates were told:

In this problem you have to use your imagination. Before you, you see a raging torrent so deep and so fast that it is quite impossible to rest anything upon the bottom of the stream. The banks are sheer, so it will be impossible to work except from the top of them.

You are on a mission in the field and having come to this brook, you are faced with the task of transporting this delicate range finder, skillfully camouflaged as a log, to the far bank and of bringing that box of percussion caps, camouflaged as a rock, to this side. In carrying out this assignment you may make use of any materials around here. When the job is done, all of you, as well as any material you used, are to be back on this side.

The limits within which you are to work are marked by the two white stakes on each bank [the stakes were approximately fifteen feet apart], and you are not permitted to jump across the stream. (Fiske 1947, 95-96)

In the *Brook* event, the OSS A&S staff could easily discern the difference between assertive and effective leadership. The assertive leader usually began by proposing a possible course of action or by asking each man for his suggestion, though in reality he truly believed that his plan was the only one that would work, thus taking charge of the situation. If he was successful at gaining the position of power through either of these means, he might continue to be in charge for the remainder of the event--even though his ideas were flawed and his plans ill conceived. Any suggestions to this

leader for change usually were not well received. In contrast, the effective leader appeared to command the respect of the group, possess the ability to organize their ideas into a plan, and was forceful enough to guide the group through execution of the task with diplomacy. In the end, this type of leader was able to complete the test with an effective working team (Fiske 1947, 96-97).

The group was escorted to the *Wall* station as soon as it had finished the *Brook* event. Here the group faced a wall that was ten feet high and fifteen feet long. Next to this wall the candidates spotted a heavy log, an old board a few inches longer than the log, and a couple of two-by-fours that were three feet in length. Behind this wall the candidates could see another wall, parallel to the first one, which was the same height and length. The two walls were eight feet apart. The candidates were informed that although they could not see it (fact was mixed with fantasy here) the barrier they saw actually consisted of two walls (fact) separated by a two hundred-foot deep canyon (fantasy). They were escaping from Japanese soldiers and in order to complete their mission and save themselves, they would have to get to the other side of the barrier with their oversized bazooka (the heavy log). The candidates were informed that they could get across the wall in any manner that they desired, but they were not permitted to walk around it and anyone who fell in the two hundred-foot canyon would be out of the exercise. The Wall task rated the same variables that were rated and observed at the Brook and since the two events followed one another so closely on the schedule, the OSS A&S staff often treated them as one test for evaluation purposes (Fiske 1947, 99-101).

The *Construction* task was an individual effort. In this event, the candidate was ordered to direct the construction of a wooden frame structure with two provided helpers (in reality, A&S staff members). Prior to the arrival of his helpers, an OSS A&S staff member demonstrated to the candidate what needed to be accomplished, using a completed model of the project. One of the helpers (a staffer using the name 'Kippy' in the exercise) was designated by the A&S staff to be a passive, sluggish-type person. Kippy did nothing unless ordered to do so, and he stood around with his hands in his pockets, concerned with insignificant events and generally acting like a bothersome individual. The other helper (another staffer using the name 'Buster') was aggressive, quick to offer poorly planned ideas, eager to express disagreement with any plan, no matter how good, and ready to criticize the candidate's perceived weak points (Fiske 1947, 102-112).

Although the candidate was informed in a pre-event briefing that the *Construction* event was to be a test of leadership, the event was really designed to assess the candidate's emotional maturity and frustration tolerance. The event was also designed to test the candidate's ability to maintain, while being distracted, the cover he had come up with. Following execution of the event, a post-construction interview was held. It was here that some candidates admitted to A&S staff members that they had been on the verge of hitting one or both of the helpers. Some candidates even asked to be released from the A&S process if work in the OSS required that one remain in control of himself in such a situation. Others, although trembling visibly, denied that the event upset them and attempted to act as if everything was fine. Additionally, since most people

unconsciously relax after a period of intense stress, the A&S staff used the interview to once again attempt to get the candidate to reveal true personal information (Fiske 1947, 112).

After lunch the *Leaderless Group Discussion* was conducted. This event was designed by the OSS A&S staff to be the indoor, verbal counterpart to the physical Brook and Wall events. In a group setting, the question was posed "What are the major postwar problems facing the United States and (if you have time) along what lines do you think they should be solved?" (MacKinnon 1991, 6). At the conclusion, the group was asked to nominate, by secret ballot, the most persuasive speaker of the group. This event provided the A&S staff with yet another chance to measure the qualifications of *effective intelligence, leadership, energy and initiative, and social relations*.

At the conclusion of this event, the candidates were subjected to another individual event, the *Stress Interview*. Each candidate was told to imagine that a night guard had just discovered him searching secret files located in a government office in Washington. The candidate was also informed that he was not an employee of this agency and could produce no identification when asked for by the guard. The A&S staff went on to explain further that the guard had then decided to escort the apprehended candidate to a security office for questioning and that the trip would take approximately twelve minutes. During these twelve minutes the candidate had to invent an innocent cover story to explain his actions. After receiving the briefing from the A&S staff, the candidate was given the twelve minutes to develop his story (Fiske 1947, 133-135).

At the end of the twelfth minute, the candidate was instructed to knock on a door of an office labeled A-13, located in the basement area of the main A&S building. Upon being permitted to enter, the candidate was told to have a seat. Initially, the candidate was subjected to questions concerning his actions, which were phrased in a sympathetic or understanding manner. But this changed once the candidate began to slip up in relating his story. The examiner pounced on any error or misstep as a suspicious sign, and his questioning style began to take on a rapid, merciless cross-examination form. The A&S staff member who questioned the candidate was a New York trial lawyer and was extremely skilled at the task of cross-examining others. Finally, at a point predetermined by the A&S staff, another staff member would interrupt the questioning with the following sentence: "We now have abundant evidence you have not been telling the truth. That is all" (MacKinnon 1991, 7). Then after some whispered discussion by the A&S staff, the main interviewer would tell the candidate that he had failed the test and that he was dismissed. The candidate was then instructed to go to a third floor room and await further instructions. (MacKinnon 1991, 7)

Here the candidate found a person reading a newspaper with his feet on the desk. The person, really an A&S staff member, would inquire as to whether the candidate was all right. This session was conducted in a very casual manner and was designed to get the candidate to relax and relate his feelings concerning the event that he had just completed. While the *Stress Interview* had been designed to test a candidate's ability to tolerate intense emotional and intellectual strain, this "Third Floor Session," as it was called, provided the A&S staff with the opportunity to discover whether or not the candidate

would break his cover while he attempted to relax after a particularly stressful situation (Fiske 1947, 133-142). This was the last event before dinner.

After dinner, all of the candidates were administered a test that was intended to discover how culturally astute or sensitive they were. The A&S staffers considered this test essential since all the candidates were destined for work overseas. After completion of this test, a memory exam was given in order to test the candidates' ability to see and remember minute details after a short period of study, specifically eight minutes. After studying a map, they were required to answer, in twelve minutes, thirty questions concerning the map's details. After the map test, the candidates received another comprehension test that attempted to determine their understanding of physical and mechanical relationships that they might encounter in their fieldwork.

The last test of the first day was called the "SIX-2 Test." This test was designed to assess the candidate's ability to extract and evaluate important intelligence information. This was done through the use of four documents purported to be of Chinese origin. The documents supposedly contained information from a captured Japanese captain. In preparation for an "important meeting with the Military Intelligence Division," the candidate was to extract the pertinent facts from the reports and make an evaluation of their importance (Fiske 1947, 143). For this test, the candidate was allowed forty-five minutes. This last test ended the prospective OSS operative's first full day at the assessment center.

Second Full Day of A&S

The schedule of events for the second day of the A&S process was no less strenuous than the first and was in concert with the OSS A&S staff's intent of keeping the candidate under fairly constant tension. The emphasis for the second day would again be on situational tests and performance tasks designed to allow the A&S staff to observe and assess for the desired qualifications. Unlike the first day however, in which the tests and events had been leaderless in nature, this day's events would allow for observation of each candidate in an assigned leadership position while he and his group attempted to solve an operational problem.

The second day began at 8:30 a.m. The candidates were assembled in a classroom where they were asked by a member of the A&S staff to record two items on a slip of paper. The first item was to be a one-or two-sentence description concerning the basic facts of the cover story that the candidate had developed while at the assessment site. The second item was a statement that outlined his plan for postwar actions. This second item was to be written in a truthful manner, yet in a way that would not seriously damage his cover. These two pieces of information were then given to an A&S staff member located in the room, and the candidate was free to depart.

These two seemingly unrelated bits of information had an important purpose, which was to provide to the A&S staff with personal information needed to execute a situational event. The event, called the *Improvisation*, had to be custom-tailored for each candidate. This event would be conducted in the evening hours of this very day.

After departure from the classroom, the candidate and his assigned group reported to one of the stations designed to test leadership qualities. For this purpose, the A&S staff had designed five events; they were: (1) the Mined Road, (2) the Sentry, (3) the Agent's Room, (4) the Blown Bridge, and (5) Killing the Mayor. Since there were usually more than five candidates in a group, time constraints dictated that those candidates whose proposed branch assignment would not demand a leadership ability (or so the A&S staff believed) were not assigned a problem. Though each of these problems had different scenarios and stress levels associated with the successful completion of the event, they all were designed to allow the A&S staff the opportunity to observe and assess the candidate's leadership qualities. Only one of these, *Mined Road*, is discussed here.

The A&S staff understood that leadership skills observed in a candidate during a leaderless situation can often differ from those observed when the candidate has been formally-appointed role of leader. The A&S staff recognized that events like the *Wall* and the *Brook* provided limited insight concerning the leadership abilities of the candidates. What had been observed during the *Wall* and *Brook* events were the attributes of initiative and assertiveness, because in this medium (a test with no leader) successful completion of the event usually depended upon these attributes. The staff observed that those who did succeed in directing the plan during these events appeared to spend a majority of their time maintaining the status of an informal leader and less time actually organizing and executing the operation. Hence, while these types of leaderless events did produce some measure of leadership and were useful in identifying the

candidate with a strong drive for dominance, there was a need for events that offered a candidate an opportunity to reveal his true ability when placed in a position of authority (Fiske 1947, 147-148). The preliminary instructions for the leadership events were as follows:

You are now going to participate in a number of field problems. In each of these you will work together as a team with one member assigned the role of leader. In each problem, we will tell you what the situation is. From then on you are on your own. If you happen to go beyond what we consider the necessary limits of the problem, we'll let you know; so you can proceed as you wish unless we tell you otherwise. We will let you know when the problem is over. All right, let's go to the first one, and let's try to make each situation as realistic as possible. (Fiske 1947, 148)

The *Mined Road* event began with a situational scenario that was read to the designated leader-candidate in front of the entire group. The scenario had the group pretend that they were attempting to return to a friendly country after conducting a mission in enemy territory. The scenario further stated that the group had just completed the mission by destroying a bridge and was walking to link up with transportation that would take them to the friendly country. A guerrilla band, friendly to the US and operating in this same area, would supply their transportation. In order to reach the destination where the transportation would be waiting, however, they would have to cross a mined road. The mines were pressure-sensitive and the leader-candidate was told that it was not possible to neutralize or dig them up. Lastly, for the purpose of the exercise, the candidate was told to assume that the road was between the two white lines that were twelve feet apart, and time was of the essence because the explosions at the bridge had

alerted enemy troops. The candidate had a twelve-foot log, a fourteen-foot log, some stones, a few two-by-fours, and two lengths of rope with which to work.

The leader-candidate faced the problem of organizing tasks for troop members, and of accomplishing this under the pressure of time and, of course, A&S staff observation. Mission success was defined as being able to lead one's men across the road without injury. Yet, with the dilemma of the time constraint inserted into the problem--if the leader-candidate took too long in getting across, the enemy would capture the group, and he would fail the test--a premium was placed on the candidate's ability to quickly assess the tasks to be accomplished, to align them with the troops (other candidates), and to use the time available to lead the execution of these tasks as he articulated them.

The way in which the appointed leader conducted discussions of the various solutions available gave the A&S staff opportunities to observe his ability to organize and relate his ideas. The logic flow and presentation of these ideas were of particular interest to the staff. Additionally, since the responsibility for mission success was now on his shoulders, the A&S staff could also observe and assess how well this candidate could entertain and employ the ideas of others. This event also provided the A&S staff the opportunity to observe the abilities of the other candidates to work as subordinates. For the A&S staff, it was just as important to know if a candidate could take and effectively execute orders because of the certainty that, if selected, all of these candidates would eventually have to fit into a military or quasi-military chain of command (Fiske 1947, 149).

When the event was completed or the time limit had elapsed, the A&S staff member conducting the exercise would gather the candidates for a review of the events. First, the leader would be questioned about his impression of the mission's success and the solution that was executed. This provided yet another measure of the candidate's confidence in a good solution--or a bad one for that matter--and a measure of his frankness in discussing the events that took place. Additionally, the A&S staff had the opportunity to assess the quickness with which the appointed leader learned from the mistakes that might have been made. Next, the group was questioned about their thoughts on the process. Through their comments, they could reveal their measure of respect and confidence in the appointed leader and also give the A&S staff a gauge of their own intelligence. This event proved to be extremely beneficial to the A&S staff and provided feedback in the areas of *energy and initiative, effective intelligence and social relations*, in addition to *leadership*.

The last forty-five minutes of the morning was used for the execution of the *Terrain Test*. The students had been given instructions for this event on the first full day of the A&S process. The *Terrain Test* required the candidates to answer the thirty multiple-choice questions about physical layout of the assessment site. Additionally, they were required to submit a written guess as to what the site had been used for in the past. These test scores were then converted into a rating that would allow for an additional measure of the candidate's ability to observe, infer, and report.

After lunch on this day all candidates under the age of forty-five who had successfully passed the physical exam of the pre-A&S screening negotiated the *Obstacle*

Course. This was a test of the candidate's physical agility and daring, but also yielded a measure of his motivation. This was observed and assessed through the effort that the candidate expended on each obstacle. It was not really important whether the candidate was successful at its eventual negotiation or not; the important part was the effort expended, which was used by the A&S staff as a way to measure the candidate's potential likelihood to exert himself during emergency conditions in the field.

The OSS A&S staff set up the *Obstacle Course* to answer some particular questions about the candidate's motivation. The A&S staff focused on whether or not the candidate gave up easily on a difficult obstacle and then quickly selected and negotiated an easier one; whether or not the candidate's interest quickly waned when confronted with failure; and whether or not he met each obstacle with determination and persistence. These bits of information usually served to highlight or confirm what had already been observed in the candidate over the previous one and one-half days.

After the *Obstacle Course* and lunch, the candidates took a number of other tests before dinner; these included the *Teaching Test*, the *Names and Identification Test*, the *Movie Observation Test*, the *Code Aptitude Test* and finally the *Interrogation Test*. The *Teaching Test* was designed by the OSS A&S staff to observe and assess a candidate's teaching abilities. In the SO and OG branches, the OSS field operative could expect to teach tactical operations to indigenous personnel. The appraisal of this event was strictly qualitative and took into account the candidate's understanding of the material, his organization, and his success in keeping the interest of the class.

The *Names and Identification Test* and the *Movie Observation Test* examined a candidate's observation and reporting qualifications. The *Names and Identification Test* tested the candidate's ability to associate names and identifications with faces. This test was conducted by showing the candidate a series of slides that contained a photograph with corresponding personal data. The same slides were then shown at a later time, without the personal information, and the candidate was required to write down all the data associated with this particular face on the slide. During this test, attempts were made to distract the candidates during their observation tasks and the test was measured accordingly.

The *Movie Observation Test* again required that the candidates observe and report. In this test, the candidates were shown two motion-picture sequences of approximately two and one-half minutes in length. The candidate was then instructed to pretend that he had just observed this sequence in real-life, and it depicted the actions of a person on whom he was to report. But the actual reporting was to be done by a fellow OSS agent from whom he would receive a written report. The candidate was then to judge the accuracy of the written report, done by the OSS A&S staff, with regard to what he had just seen on the screen. The candidate was given ten minutes to accomplish this task. His observations and reporting procedures were assessed. The scores of the *Names and Identification Test* and the *Movie Observation Test* were combined to give the A&S staff another assessment of the candidate's ability to observe and report qualifications.

The last two tests given before dinner were the *Code Aptitude Test* and the *Interrogation Test*. The *Code Aptitude Test*, given only to personnel recruited by the SI

branch, gave the OSS A&S staff a measure of the candidate's knowledge of the Morse Code. This test also provided the baseline for further Morse Code testing if the candidate was selected at the completion of the A&S program. The *Interrogation Test* provided the A&S staff an opportunity to observe the candidate as he attempted to extract information from an "escaped prisoner." This prisoner, actually a member of the A&S staff, had a fixed story to use during the interrogation. The candidate had twelve minutes in which to gather as much information as he could. At the end of these twelve minutes, the candidate was escorted to another room and instructed to write down all the information that he had obtained. The candidates were observed and assessed on their abilities to build rapport with the prisoner, to ask productive questions, and to follow-up on leads and hints.

After dinner, the *Improvisation* test occurred. The next to last event for the second day, it was considered by the staff to be one of the most revealing of all the events in the A&S process. This test consisted of role-playing situations that had been formulated by the OSS A&S staff during some of their infamous brain-storming sessions; it had been inserted into the A&S process to place the candidate into a situation in which he might find himself in real life. The catch was that this event also included another candidate, and would take place in front of an audience.

Candidates were placed into role-playing situations that had been designed with each candidate's personality in mind. These custom-fit situations allowed the A&S staff a closer observation of the candidate and assisted them in resolving any doubts or critical hunches concerning the candidate's ability to act as an OSS operative. For example,

there might still be some doubt as to how candidate X took and reacted to criticism, or how candidate Y handled frustration. Though the staff had seen the candidate in a variety of situations during the past couple days, they had not yet been able to observe his actions in a day-to-day social or business setting. The A&S staff believed that *Improvisation* was the answer to this problem and would lead a candidate, albeit unwittingly, to reveal his typical social attitudes and assist the A&S staff in proving or disproving the presence of specific traits suspected in past observations.

In the test, a pair of candidates was presented with a description of a hypothetical situation that would precede an encounter between them (Wiggins 1973, 527). They were then required, in front of an audience that consisted of the remaining candidates and A&S assessors, to improvise the interaction that might take place. The candidates were reminded to respond realistically, as they would if confronted with such a situation in real life, and not to consider the *Improvisation* a “play” that required they act in a manner different from their true feelings. The challenge for the OSS A&S staff was to invent situations where the candidate, after receiving the above instructions and hearing the scenario, would respond in a manner that was consistent and realistically aligned with his true personality. One example scenario follows:

[Candidate] A. moved to a small city about three months ago and opened a business there. He has been doing quite well and one month ago sent in an application for membership in a club in the town. He has heard nothing in response to this application and goes to the home of [Candidate] B., a prominent member of the club, with whom he is pleasantly acquainted. (A. is then sent out of the room and B. is told that A. has received several blackballs.) A. is then called back into the room. (Fiske 1947, 170)

In this situation, the A&S staff desired a tone that was neutral, and the term “pleasantly acquainted” left some room for the candidates to express a variety of emotional responses. Additionally, in this scenario there is a definite issue to be reconciled and both participants must interact in order to accomplish this. This custom-tailored situation would then be used to give the role of A to a candidate who was thought to be extremely sensitive to rejection. The role of B, in this situation, would then be assigned to a candidate thought by the A&S staff to be lacking in the qualities of tact or diplomacy. Candidates were then told that their performances were to be evaluated on their effectiveness in handling the situation and on the extent to which their performances reflected how they would actually handle such a situation in real life (Wiggins 1973, 528).

The A&S staff usually allotted seven minutes per session, and after the improvisation concluded each candidate’s reactions were questioned and commented on by the other participant and by the group as a whole. Comments by the other candidates greatly enhanced the A&S staff’s observations and assessment. Each candidate had a chance to be observed by the A&S staff in two improvisations (MacKinnon 1991, 7).

The *Improvisation* sessions also introduced alcohol, an element not seen or used in any other of the A&S tests. The A&S staff hoped that through the use of alcohol the timid candidate might loosen up and speak freely during these *Improvisation* sessions. In most cases, the candidate did actually speak more freely and alcohol proved to be a welcome diversion for the group as a whole. The one disadvantage was that if the drinking was allowed to go on for too long, the candidates became uninterested and as a

group, difficult to control, and thus the very purpose of the event would not be realized (Fiske 1947, 174). Waiting until the second session to serve alcohol marginalized this disadvantage and, as a rule, the introduction of alcohol was seen to be a positive factor.

After the *Improvisation* test, the candidates were divided into two teams to debate questions posed by the A&S staff. One of these questions was, "What shall we do with Germany after the war?" and, using this question, one team had to argue in favor of lenient measures while the other team had to argue for more stringent rules to be enforced. This event provided the A&S staff an opportunity to observe an eloquence in formal speeches--in which the candidate organized and led points for rebuttal or counter-rebuttal--not seen in the *Leaderless Group Discussion*. In this event, each candidate was again assessed on possession of the qualifications of *energy and initiative, effective intelligence, social relations, leadership* and (since the factor of alcohol was still present) the ability to maintain cover (MacKinnon 1991, 7). This concluded the second full day's activities.

Third Full Day of A&S

Day three at the A&S site began with the candidates being asked to write down their opinions of the other members of their six-person assessment group--in essence to conduct assessments of each other based on their observations and interaction. The A&S staff felt that this was the appropriate time for this to occur, based on the familiarity that the candidates now had with each other. The instruments that the candidates used to record these opinions were called the *Sociometric Questionnaire* and the *Judgement of Others Questionnaire*.

The *Sociometric Questionnaire* asked the candidates questions such as: "With whom would you enjoy continuing your acquaintance?"; "Which men expressed the most realistic and convincing opinions in the debate last night?"; "If you were a member of a group on a dangerous mission, whom would you prefer to have as your leader?" (MacKinnon 1991, 8). The *Judgement of Others Questionnaire* demanded that the candidate write short personality sketches or overviews for the other candidates in his group. The information obtained from these last two exercises completed the data collection portion of the A&S process. The remaining tasks, the *Murder Mystery Test* and *Athletic Events*, conducted throughout the day and night, were designed to allow the candidates to unwind and to keep them occupied while the staff wrote reports, attended meetings, and prepared for the next morning's selection of the candidates deemed suitable personnel.

Selection or Rejection

The staff conference that began on the afternoon of the third day and frequently lasted until the early morning hours of selection day was the culminating event of the A&S process. Though not actually involved in it, the candidate was the centerpiece. The staff conference allowed for viewing the compiled pieces of data (and their various relationships to one another) that had been collected on each of the candidates. It also presented the A&S staff with the opportunity to evaluate the candidate in relationship to all of this now integrated information. Thus, in a sense, the whole man was present to finally be assessed. In this last event, the candidate was evaluated in full, and a decision was made concerning his selection or rejection.

The entire assessment staff was present at the staff conference and the director of the A&S site chaired the event. The conference was an informal affair in which the director attempted to allow uninhibited discussion. A presentation of each candidate's personality description started the conference. After each one was read, the meeting was opened up for discussion. On the basis of the description, staff members were free to discuss or debate (in relation to the established desired qualifications) the ability of the candidate to fulfill the proposed assignment. An attempt was made to achieve consensus through this discussion rather than through any formal voting process. The final decision was given in terms of "accept" or "reject." Once a candidate was accepted, the A&S staff determined his final rating in relation to the desired qualifications (Wiggins 1973, 530).

Though most A&S decisions were given in terms of "accept" or "reject," occasionally some of the "accepts" were qualified even further. An example of this further qualification was an "accept" that was followed by the recommendation that the candidate not be utilized for the originally proposed job, but for one in another branch. Another example was the one termed the "red flag" descriptor. This red flag descriptor was placed on the records of any "accept" candidate that the A&S staff felt was to be a conditional "accept." This conditional acceptance was agreed upon as contingent on further observation and assessment that was to be conducted at any follow-up training that this candidate would receive. At the conclusion of this training, along with its associated observation and assessment, the candidate's manner of performance would be reviewed once again. At this time, use of the additional observation and assessment

results would be factored into a final decision stating the *unconditional* acceptance or rejection (Wiggins 1973, 530).

Conclusion

Once the OSS A&S staff had finished with their acceptance and quantification work, their final task was to provide the OSS headquarters with additional comments and ratings on the candidate's ability to perform in positions different from that for which he had been recommended. Additionally, the staff had to comment on the candidate's potential to perform at higher levels of authority and under conditions not tested for in the A&S process. A written report, delivered to the OSS headquarters in Washington, contained all this information, including all of the candidate's written work, personality descriptions, and detailed ratings. Thus, the OSS A&S process, all three and one-half intense (for both candidate and staff) days of it, came to an end.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

Given the unique nature of special operations and the often-isolated environments, it takes a discriminating selection and assessment process and hard work to find the right person. But it is important to learn up front whether a person has the qualities and the will necessary to perform to highly demanding standards. (USSOF 1997, 14)

After the concerted effort devoted to the development and execution of the Assessment and Selection (A&S) program, what was the OSS A&S staff's opinion of the program's effectiveness? What were some of the staff's suggestions for improvement if this type of program was ever to be attempted again? After study of the OSS A&S program, does it appear that use of any A&S events would improve the assessment and selection program conducted for today's Special Forces personnel? What might be some of the assessment and selection topics that should be considered for further research? These questions are discussed in this chapter.

A&S Program Effectiveness

When writing about the effectiveness of the A&S program that they had labored so hard to develop, the A&S staff declared, "Although thousands of man-hours were spent in the evaluation process, the final verdict is a question mark" (Fiske 1947, 392). By its own admission, the OSS A&S staff was prevented from rendering a scientifically-proven decision about the effectiveness of the OSS A&S program because of unforeseen complications, two of which are mentioned here.

The first complication centers on a comparative assessment. This type of examination would involve following established procedures that call for a systematic examination of data recorded before and after the introduction of the program. After assessing the data, a decision concerning the program's effectiveness would be rendered, based on the perceived improvement of the data that occurred after the installation of the program. Jerry Wiggins, in his book *Personality and Prediction: Principles of Personality Assessment*, contends that in order to truly evaluate a personnel selection program's effectiveness, one must compare that program to whatever was in use previously. But herein lies the problem: the OSS A&S staff had no prior internal assessment program to which it could compare its A&S process.

Nothing even remotely resembling an assessment and selection process existed in the OSS prior to the A&S program. The types of assessment programs that existed outside the realm of the OSS were hardly similar enough for any reasonable comparison. While OSS mission failures attributed to unreliable personnel had necessitated the initiation of an A&S process, the OSS A&S staff possessed virtually no recorded data to scientifically depict the percentage of failures among the thousands of OSS personnel that had been put to work without the benefit of an assessment and selection process. If data had been present, the OSS A&S staff would have been in a position to determine whether the percentage of "unassessed" personnel that had been rated low or unsatisfactory by supervisors in the field, was greater than or less than the percentage of "assessed" personnel so rated. From the start, the A&S staff knew it had little or no control over this problem. In his study of the A&S process, Wiggins relays the A&S staff's sentiments,

stating, "at the outset. . . .we would never know certainly whether we had been an asset or a liability to the OSS" (Wiggins 1973, 531).

The second complication involved something over which the A&S staff had control--planning. Attempting to scientifically determine the true effectiveness of any program, and particularly a program of the magnitude of the OSS A&S, requires proper planning and the subsequent allocation of resources. In this area, the A&S staff failed. When the A&S process began, the war and its demands required that all the A&S staffers' efforts be focused primarily on the assessment and selection of the needed personnel. As a result, only a minimal amount of planning was conducted for the scientific evaluation of the effectiveness of the A&S process. Thus, the A&S staff could not properly evaluate their program.

Yet, at least some planning did occur. The minimal amount of evaluation planning that transpired resulted in the establishment of an appraisal process. This process used four methods to obtain feedback on the performance of A&S-selected personnel who were, and had been, working overseas. The first method, the *Overseas Staff Appraisal*, attempted to gather information about overseas, A&S-selected personnel through the use of interviews with immediate supervisors and associates. The second method, the *Theater Commander Appraisal*, was misleading with respect to its name, because the Theater Commander gave no direct input. In actuality, this process obtained information about A&S-selected personnel through the use of questionnaires completed only by immediate supervisors (MacKinnon 1991, 9).

A third method, the *Reassignment Area Appraisal*, was instituted in the fall of 1944 and was conducted with overseas, A&S-selected personnel as they were on their way to another assignment. The *Reassignment Area Appraisal* consisted of a clinical interview and a self-report questionnaire that asked the OSS operative to rate his possession of the qualifications that had been tested in the A&S process. The final appraisal method used by the OSS A&S staff was called the *Returnee Appraisal*; it asked OSS operatives returning to the United States to report on other A&S-selected personnel who had been working in their theater of operations (MacKinnon 1991, 9).

Though in theory use of these four methods of appraisal may appear to have allowed for an accurate evaluation of the A&S program, this did not hold true in practice. A scarcity of time and other resources made it nearly impossible for the A&S staff to conduct the appraisals, especially overseas staff appraisals, for all A&S-selected personnel. While some collection work was conducted and data obtained there were still problems. A majority of these personnel on whom data had been collected had attended selection at Station S during the first six months of A&S program's existence. Unfortunately, any data obtained during this time would not provide an accurate evaluation. In these first six months the newborn A&S program was still somewhat incomplete and evolving with regard to the events and the conditions that candidates were forced to endure. To the A&S staff, who desired a scientific evaluation of their program, a data pool that was skewed towards personnel who had attended an immature A&S process was deemed worthless (Wiggins 1973, 532). To emphasize this, Wiggins states, "no time or manpower was available for consideration of the accuracy of such selection.

By the time resources became available for adequate appraisal of overseas performance, the war was over” (Wiggins 1973, 531).

Even so, one A&S staff member chose to comment on the effectiveness of the A&S program. Donald MacKinnon, in his document *How Assessment Centers Were Started in the United States: The OSS Assessment Program*, states that he believes that the OSS A&S process was ineffective at predicting the performance of overseas personnel. His evaluation is based solely on the aforementioned flaws detected in the use of the four performance-appraisal methods (MacKinnon 1991, 9). The remainder of the A&S staff state:

Nearly all the members of the staff and many of their colleagues in OSS who observed the operation of the program had the strong impression that, by and large, the administration had been furnished with meaningful descriptions of the traits and abilities of the recruits, which were of considerable service in winnowing the wheat from the chaff and in placing the wheat where it belonged. But how valuable is an impression? It was the need for certainty, the compulsion which motivates all scientists, which prompted us to embark on an extensive program to check the ratings and recommendations of an assessment. Unhappily the final result was a decrease, rather than an increase, in degrees of certainty--a temporarily discomfiting, but in the long run, often-productive state of mind (Fiske 1947, 393).

It was that need for certainty, which they were unable to produce, that kept the A&S staff from being able to accurately assess its own program.

OSS A&S Staff's Suggestions for Improvement

Rather than remaining content to stay quiet about what might be seen as an impossible situation, the OSS A&S staff members chose another course of action. Though unable to truly assess the effectiveness of their program, they decided to examine it and offer suggested improvements for any future assessment and selection programs.

These suggestions addressed the procedural errors that the staff believed they had committed during the A&S development and implementation process. It appears that the A&S staff hoped that these suggestions would be used and tested in the planning and operating of future military and civilian assessment centers. The three most salient ones are discussed here.

First of all, the A&S psychologists recommended that a staff of suitable size, uniform intellectual competence, emotional flexibility, and diversification with respect to age, sex, social status, and specific skills be chosen for a future assessment and selection program. They believed that it was extremely important for these staff categories to be reviewed in the very beginning, because the convictions and talents of the chosen staff would directly influence future assessment procedures and associated tasks. The A&S staff also emphasized that the number and kind of procedures administered during a future assessment and selection process must be carefully considered, because they would have a direct impact on the number of staff needed to carry out such an activity (Fiske 1947, 473).

Additionally, this suggestion for improvement outlined some undesirable attributes of future assessment and selection staff members. Among the culpable attributes were religious, political, or racial beliefs that might affect the judgment of any staff member. The A&S staff also stated that selecting future staff members who do not possess these potentially troublesome attributes would also prevent any suspicions that assessed candidates might have about these sentiments being a determining factor in their acceptance or rejection. This suggestion is especially important when the assessment and

selection process is offered as a “semi-scientific” or a neutral means to select personnel (Fiske 1947, 473-475).

The second suggestion for improvement made by the A&S staff stated that the designers of future assessment and selection programs should conduct a preparatory study of the jobs and job holders already in the organization *before* designing the actual program. This step, the A&S staff offered, should be considered very critical to the proper understanding and design of the assessment and selection process that is eventually chosen. Essentially they were saying that the more time devoted to this procedure up front, the better the outcome. If not conducted, “the staff is ignorant of the precise needs and standards of the organization and will be laboring under so great a handicap that its decisions will not be worth the cost of the undertaking” (Fiske 1947, 475-476).

The third and last relevant suggestion for improvement outlined the A&S staff’s recommendation to design a procedure that allows for a scientific evaluation of the assessment program’s effectiveness. The staff proposed that this be done through a design that would permit a periodical statistical analysis of the assessment findings and an analysis of the program as a whole. This would be accomplished through a pre-implementation design that enabled an examination of the strength of any variables selected for use in the assessment and allowed for a use of the results in an appraisal of these selected variables. Additionally, this procedure would necessitate combining these resulting variable appraisals into a format, which would produce a scientific evaluation of the program as a whole (Fiske 1947, 485).

As part of this suggestion, the A&S staff pointed out the necessity of having designated staff members whose sole function is the appraisal of the assessment and selection process being conducted. These members had to be free from all other responsibilities, and could not be bothered by extraneous details. Only in this way, the A&S staff postulated, could the system of assessment be improved. The A&S staff felt that by providing these suggestions for improvement, future assessment and selection processes would be able to elude the complications that had plagued their work on the A&S program.

OSS A&S Applicability to Special Forces Assessment and Selection (SFAS)

If through the study of history, one can learn lessons, both good and bad, what then can be learned from the OSS A&S process? Is it necessary or possible to implement some of the A&S events or procedures into the assessment and selection process used by today's US Army Special Forces? Would use of these events improve the process? If so, how can these events be best utilized? These are some of the questions that the study of the OSS A&S process has piqued in this author's mind; they are discussed in this section.

SFAS Overview

Today's US Army Special Forces (SF) units proudly trace their history to the OSS elements of the World War II era. As a result, these two organizations have many things in common--from the types of assigned missions, Unconventional Warfare (UW) for example, to many of the military tactics and procedures used to properly conduct special operations. For the purpose of this research, however, the most important item shared by

these two units concerns the desire of each to have a certain type of person working within their organization.

This desire dictated the OSS selection of a person who could be trusted to successfully execute, physically and emotionally, missions with possible strategic implications. The type of person the OSS desired--one who was intelligent, emotionally stable, able to work on a team, etc.--is the same caliber that today's SF units desire. These units realize, as did the OSS, that quality is more important than quantity, and have adapted this insight to develop and utilize an assessment and selection process that procures well-suited personnel.

The program conducted to assess and select personnel for work in US Army SF units is called the Special Forces Assessment and Selection (SFAS) course. The idea of an assessment and selection course for use in SF originated in 1987. The inception stated purpose of the SFAS program was to "provide highly suitable soldiers for Special Forces and prevent the Army from wasting money and training resources on individuals who are not compatible with Special Forces training and duty" (Feeley 1998, 1-2). Over the years, the SFAS program has evolved into a three week-long course conducted at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

Currently, SFAS is defined as a program that is designed to be a "sequential process of testing and evaluating soldiers with different measuring tools to determine which soldiers possess sufficient levels of the attributes required to be operationally successful" (Feeley 1998, 1). The goal of the SFAS program is to select individuals who can complete the follow-up Special Forces Qualification Course (SFQC), which provides

the basic skills and training needed for service in the SF community, and who can perform successfully in one of the five SF operational groups (Feeley 1998, 1-2).

Today's SFAS candidate is assessed against thirteen different attributes. These attributes have been identified as critical for the completion of further SF training and successful performance in a SF unit. This quotient for success was determined through numerous studies by the Army Research Institute (ARI) in conjunction with personnel from the SF community. The thirteen attributes that SFAS tests are listed as: *Physical Fitness, Motivation, Teamwork, Stability, Trustworthiness, Accountability, Intelligence, Maturity, Communication, Judgment, Influence, Decisiveness, and Responsibility* (Feeley 1998, 27-28). Due to security considerations, SFAS does not release the data on what "amount" of each of these attributes a candidate must possess to be considered acceptable.

These thirteen attributes are assessed during a twenty-four-day period--with officer- and noncommissioned officer-candidates being tested together. A combination of so called "paper and pencil tests" and "field-related assessment activities" is used to test for these thirteen attributes. The paper and pencil tests consist of mental, learning, and personality exams that use evaluation instruments, such as the Minnesota Multifaceted Personality Inventory (MMPI) and the Wonderlic Personnel Intelligence Test (WPIT). The field-related assessment activities are physical fitness events that include the Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT), military orienteering, and long-distance runs (Feeley 1998, 14).

The first five days of SFAS are dedicated to acclimatization, in-processing, initial aptitude testing, and fitness events, including an APFT and a short-distance march with all individually-issued military equipment. The next eight days test a candidate's strength on individual tasks, such as long-distance runs, obstacle courses, and military orienteering. Two days of "semi-recovery" follow the individual tasks, and are designed to be less physically demanding than the previous eight in order to prepare the candidates' bodies for the upcoming team-oriented events (Feeley 1998, 39).

The team-oriented events, occurring over a six-day period, include leader-appointed group events, forced sleep deprivation, and a long-distance march with all individually-issued military equipment. The last three days, allocated for out-processing, give the selection board time to name those candidates deemed acceptable. The entire SFAS procedure is conducted in an environment that is formal and disciplined, and one that offers no feedback to the candidate on his manner of performance (Feeley 1998, 14).

A Void in the Testing Method and A Suggestion for Improvement

After a brief review of today's SFAS process, coupled with a personal knowledge of its products, this author asks, "Is there any room for improvement?" It appears from its development and execution that the SFAS process took into account the suggestions for improvement offered by the OSS A&S staff. Additionally, SFAS also appears to be providing SF with personnel who have the ability to complete additional SF training and perform successfully in SF units--thus, a success story. Given these points, can this program be improved? Some think it can.

In his thesis, "Evaluation of SFAS," Sean Feeley states, "... there has been little critical analysis of the incumbent attributes and testing methods of the SFAS program" (Feeley 1998, 4-5). As part of his conclusions he states that, "... there is a generally low perceived congruent relationship between the testing methods and all the attributes. . . SFAS is predominately based on physically oriented testing methods that do not test all the attributes" (Feeley 1998, 50). One could infer from Feeley's comments and research that current testing methods being employed by SFAS, with emphasis on the physically-oriented field-related assessment activities, indicate a belief that a majority of SF mission requirements are physical in nature. Additionally, Feeley's research appears to reveal a void in the testing methods currently used at SFAS. This testing method void is the unexamined or under-utilized area between the pen and paper tests and the field-related assessment activities. Are the current testing methods, including the apparent void, sufficient for the stated goal of preparing future SF soldiers for the demands of the SFQC and future SF missions? This author believes that they are not.

This author does not believe that the physical demands placed on SF operational personnel are any more numerous, or rigorous for that matter, than the mental ones. Due to SF mission requirements and changing world conditions, both physical and mental attributes must receive equal weight in the testing process. Current SF mission priorities appear to support this statement. Though no quantitative, critical analysis of the SFAS course is conducted here, this author believes that after a study of the OSS A&S process, coupled with Feeley's arguments, a qualitative discussion concerning a suggestion for improvement is warranted. The suggestion contains three parts: a discussion of current

SF mission priorities in relation to SFAS-identified attributes and testing methods, a recommended target audience, and a proposal of A&S events to address the apparent testing void.

Current SF Mission Priorities, SFAS Attributes, and Testing Methods

To begin a discussion of possible SFAS improvement, this author believes that the purpose of SFAS must be viewed in relation to its currently identified attributes and testing styles. To do this, certain questions must be posed: "What are SFAS and SFQC graduates being asked to do while in an SF unit?" If the purpose of SFAS is to provide personnel that will be successful in SF operations, one might wonder, "What type of operations must SF personnel be successful at, and what attributes will lend the best chance for that success?" These questions appear to have already been asked and answered by the SFAS staff. However, additional review may allow for a clearer understanding of attributes that are critically needed, and how SFAS currently tests them.

As mentioned previously, one of the similarities shared by the OSS and today's SF units is the mission of Unconventional Warfare (UW). Currently UW is listed as the first of the seven primary SF missions that include Foreign Internal Defense (FID), Combating Terrorism (CBT), Special Reconnaissance (SR), Direct Action (DA), Counter-Proliferation (CP), and Information Operations (IO). UW is defined as:

a broad spectrum of military and paramilitary operations, predominately conducted by indigenous or surrogate forces organized, trained, equipped, supported and directed in varying degrees by an external source. . . .SF units do not create resistance movements. They provide advice, training, and assistance to indigenous resistance forces already in existence. (FM 31-20 1998, 2-1)

In today's military environment, the situation is one of seriously declining resources. This has forced many organizations to re-examine their relevance in order to receive any of the minimal resources that are available. Some units have gone so far as to redefine or reinvent themselves. However, during this process, the UW mission (along with FID) has provided the SF community with a niche that cannot be taken away and one that truly sets it apart from the rest of the US armed forces. Thus, the UW mission has come to be known as the defining mission for the SF community.

In his work "Special Forces' Mission Focus for the Future," Keith Tovo states that, "When Special Forces was officially formed in 1952, its sole orientation was unconventional warfare; in fact the organizers consciously fought the incorporation of direct, 'ranger missions'" (Tovo 1995, 7). In this document, Tovo studies the role of SF in the post-Cold War age through the examination of two post-Cold War missions, Operation Desert Shield/Storm and Operation Uphold Democracy, that had significant SF involvement. Based on this examination, Tovo concludes that, "The experience of the recent past, and an examination of the nature of future warfare, indicates that Special Forces' greatest contributions have been and will continue to be as a result of indirect efforts" (Tovo 1995, 46). These "indirect efforts" or missions that Tovo refers to encompass UW and FID operations.

Additionally, senior SF soldiers profess and continually stress that an SF unit that can successfully conduct a UW mission can easily accomplish any of the other six primary missions. This notion is rooted in the complexities associated with the UW mission. Unlike the others, the UW mission is usually accomplished in a denied territory

over a much longer, protracted period of time. UW mission success is dependent on close coordination and cooperation with indigenous personnel. Other UW mission conditions include isolation from US culture and the potential for much greater ambiguity and flexibility than that found in the other six primary SF missions (Feeley 1998, 21). According to Feeley, UW mission success is directly traced to how well the SF element, but in particular the officer, is able to interact with the indigenous personnel (Feeley 1998, 20).

So, if the UW mission is the defining mission of the SF community, and indirect missions (UW and FID) are the more likely missions to be conducted--what types of attributes, based on the above conditions, must an SF soldier possess in order to be successful?

To answer this question it is important to understand how the conditions present in UW mission might translate into previously-identified SFAS attributes. For instance, the ability to build rapport, a skill often needed to establish credibility, plays an important role in the initial stages of a UW mission. This ability could be placed under the SFAS attribute category of *Communication*. Establishing credibility or an interpersonal dialogue with one's counterpart in another country is critical to continued SF involvement. Additionally, the ability to be persuasive or exert influence is highly crucial when the success of the UW mission--and possibly the lives of one's men--depends on that ability to coax an indigenous counterpart to grasp certain ideas or concepts. This characteristic would fit under the SFAS attribute category of *Influence*. Lastly, a honed tolerance for working under stress is needed, in particular if one considers the isolation

and austere environments that UW missions can present. This trait would correlate with the SFAS attribute of *Stability*. Thus, it appears that the currently identified SFAS attributes are consistent with current SF mission priorities.

However, after revealing that the attributes needed for UW or FID missions easily correlate to those already evaluated by SFAS, one must briefly examine how and to what degree SFAS presently assesses them. According to Feeley's study, the attribute of *Communication* is "not tested to a high degree" (Feeley 1998, 49). In fact, in his matrix of targeted attributes versus their associated tests, called the Matrices Summary, he presents no formal tests for the *Communication* attribute.

However, a more discriminating examination reveals that this might be somewhat misleading. The SFAS candidate is realistically offered the opportunity to demonstrate his communicative abilities while placed in charge of one of the team events during the field-related assessment activities, a physically-oriented testing method. In this event, after being designated the leader, the candidate must issue guidance and instructions on how the event will be conducted. It is here that the most effective formal assessment of the candidate's ability to communicate with others is conducted. Though it is possible that the candidate may participate in more communication-oriented actions during periods when he is not the leader, this is not mandatory and does not appear to be assessed. Thus, in the present format, the evaluators at SFAS may actually have only one true opportunity to assess the candidate's communicative abilities.

Feeley goes on to state that the attribute of *Influence* is tested twice and that *Stability* is tested three times (Feeley 1998, 49). This frequency appears to be relatively

insufficient when considering the importance of each to UW, the defining mission for SF. Additionally, these numbers pale in contrast to those posted for the attributes of *Physical Fitness* and *Motivation* which are tested six and five times, respectively (Feeley 1998, 48-49). Considering these above statements, the concept of a void in the testing methods arises. This void consists of the failure to utilize testing methods that are available between the extremes of paper and pencil testing and field-related assessment activities. One example of this void is the absence of a testing method to properly or more fully assess the attribute of *Communication*. This testing method would fall somewhere between the paper and pencil tests that, according to Feeley, fail to address the identified *Communication* attribute, and the field-related assessment activities that do so, but in an insufficient manner. Is there a middle ground between the two extremes? Are there tests that fill this testing method void and further assist the SFAS staff in selecting the right person? This author believes that these types of tests exist and that the OSS A&S process might provide the answers.

The Target Audience: The SF Officer

However, prior to addressing measures that appear to fill the void in the current testing methods, discussion will be conducted concerning what this author deems the critical point of impact for these measures--the future SF officer. This belief is based on his relation to the success or failure of SF missions. The officer-candidate, usually a captain when admitted to the SF community, will become the commander of a twelve-man Special Forces Operational Detachment Alpha (SFODA). In the execution of his duties, this officer will often be put into a position where his actions alone, verbal or non-

verbal, can dictate the success or failure of his SFODA's mission--missions, that very often are conducted at the strategic level.

What does it mean to say that SF missions are conducted at the strategic level? It conveys that the outcome of such a mission has consequences with political and military implications. For a potential SF captain, this is far removed from the days of a closely supervised maneuvering of platoon or company forces towards a tactical objective. In his new role as an SFODA commander, this captain may receive a mission that includes interface with the US ambassador to a foreign country, the commanding general of that country's military forces, and potentially the civilian leader of that country. The impression that the SF detachment leaves, undoubtedly a result of the interface between the SF officer and indigenous personnel, is permanently etched into the political and military psyche of that country. Thus, there is a definite need for an officer to be assessed and examined in excruciating detail--not only physically, but also intellectually and emotionally.

With these ideas in mind, targeting the officer-candidate would seem to be a very effective and efficient way to increase the quality of the SF community. This could be accomplished without having to resort to wholesale changes in the structure or methods present in today's SFAS process.

OSS A&S Tasks for Proposed Implementation

Instead of wholesale change aimed at addressing the officer-candidate and the apparent testing method void, this author suggests use the OSS A&S program as a guide. Reviewing the A&S menu of tasks for appropriate events and using these events may

assist in determining whether or not an SF officer-candidate is worth the expense of additional SF training dollars and time. With some modern-day modifications, three events from the OSS A&S process that appear to test the SFAS attributes of *Communication, Influence and Stability* could be utilized to address the testing method void and the proposed target audience, the officer-candidate. These events are discussed below.

The first of these applicable A&S events is the *Interrogation Exercise*. The OSS A&S staff used the *Interrogation Test* to observe the OSS candidate as he attempted to extract information from an “escaped prisoner.” The candidate was observed and assessed on his ability to build rapport and communicate through the guise of asking productive questions. He had twelve minutes in which to gather as much information as possible. At the end of these twelve minutes, the candidate was escorted to another room and instructed to write down all the information that he had obtained.

Today this test could be constructed to have the officer-candidate face the dilemma of attempting to build rapport with an “insurgent leader” and thus test the attribute of *Communication*. This insurgent leader would actually be an SFAS cadre member given instructions to make the candidate’s job as easy or as difficult as the SFAS staff desired. This type of test could be extremely helpful in assessing an officer-candidate’s ability to build rapport, maintain an inter-personal dialogue, and communicate in a time-sensitive environment--tasks often required in UW or FID missions. A notional UW plan, as briefed to the “insurgent leader” through an operations order, could also be used in this event.

The *Leaderless Group Discussion* is another OSS A&S event that correlates to SFAS attributes. This event was designed by the OSS A&S staff to test for the OSS desired qualifications of *Persuasiveness and Influence*. In a group setting, the question was posed, "What are the major postwar problems facing the United States and (if you have time) along what lines do you think they should be solved?" (MacKinnon 1991, 6). At the conclusion, the group was asked to nominate, by secret ballot, the most persuasive speaker of the group. This event also provided the OSS A&S staff with an opportunity to measure the desired qualifications of *Energy and Initiative, Leadership, Effective Intelligence, and Social Relations*.

With some modifications, the SFAS attributes of *Communication and Influence*, along with *Leadership, Judgment, and Intelligence*, could be assessed using a current-day question. The officer-candidates are posed the question, "What future strategic threats do you envision in the next ten years?" Each candidate then would be required to answer within a designated time frame as determined by the SFAS staff. This task could provide the SFAS some measure of the officer-candidate's communication abilities, logic process, persuasiveness, and influence.

The event called the *Construction Task* is the third A&S event that could be incorporated into the proposed SFAS officer-candidate assessment. In the OSS A&S program this task was disguised as a test of leadership abilities, but in reality the event was designed to assess a candidate's emotional stability, maturity, and frustration tolerance. To recap this event, which is explained in more detail in Chapter 4, the OSS candidate was informed in a pre-event briefing, that the *Construction* event was an event

that tested leadership abilities, and that he was to complete the construction of a wooden structure in ten minutes. He was then given the assistance of two laborers and was told to direct them in the accomplishment of the task. The OSS candidate was not allowed to touch any part of the structure. The two laborers, A&S staff members, were told to conduct actions contrary to the instructions given by the A&S candidate. The A&S candidate was assessed on the manner in which he dealt with the failure to complete the task as a result of the resistance to his instructions.

Without any modifications to the above exercise, today's SFAS staff could use this manner of test to present the officer-candidate with a situation found in untold numbers of UW or FID missions. This would assist the SFAS staff in obtaining an additional measure of an officer-candidate's *Stability*, and thus an understanding of this officer-candidate's tolerance for frustration and his ability to interact with others while under stress.

Use of these three sample tasks would improve and refine the assessment and selection procedures currently used at SFAS by providing a testing method that is somewhere between the paper and pencil tests and the field-related assessment activities. While the current SFAS testing has a definite bias towards physically-oriented events, these proposed A&S events, combined with the current process, would more effectively test the SFAS attributes, especially those deemed critical to UW and FID mission success. Additionally, they appear to fill the apparent testing method void. These events could be implemented without exacting an inordinate amount of monetary and personnel

resources. Additionally, no extra time would be needed at SFAS because the two-day recovery period presents an appropriate place to insert these officer-candidate events.

This suggestion for improvement, with its associated recommendations, need not necessarily be used to disqualify the officer-candidate, but perhaps to assist the SFAS staff in gaining additional information about the officer-candidate who is eventually selected. This information might prove beneficial in future job placement requirements. Other benefits to the SFAS staff might include copious insights into the interaction of officer-candidates with their peers. These suggestions would remain consistent in assessing the thirteen attributes desired by the SFAS.

Topics for Further Research

This study introduces ancillary topics that could also be researched more extensively. What was the inspiration and history behind each event used in the OSS A&S process? Were any of the women members of the OSS ever permitted to attend any type of selection process? What was the nature of the process that the OSS used for assessing and selecting indigenous personnel with whom they desired to work? What is the effectiveness, perceived or quantifiably determined, of today's SFAS process?

Conclusion

This paper has attempted to detail the evolutionary process, by organization and function, of the OSS A&S program. In the beginning, the document examined the organizational evolution of the A&S program. This was conducted through examination of evolution of the two intelligence agencies that influenced, either directly as with the OSS, or indirectly as with the COI, the A&S development. This portion also presented

examples of mission failures that occurred as a result of the haphazard manner in which these organizations recruited their operational personnel. Finally, this organizational study revealed the development of the world conditions and mission requirements that necessitated the implementation of an A&S program.

The study of the functional evolution of the A&S process followed the organizational discussion. In this section, the history of the concept of assessment and selection was traced to the Ming Dynasty. Additional research outlined the advances of the Germans and the British in their assessment and selection endeavors. Finally, a detailed discussion of the OSS A&S process was presented. The A&S staff's development of the desired qualifications and the associated tests was outlined, along with the various observation techniques. Additional research detailed the problems encountered when attempting to scientifically determine the effectiveness of the A&S program. This portion concluded with the A&S staff's suggestions for improvement.

Next, a brief qualitative review of the SFAS was presented. From this review and previous examination of the OSS A&S program, a suggestion for improvement was presented as an attempt to increase the effectiveness of today's SFAS process. This suggestion recommended the targeting of the officer-candidate population with the implementation of three OSS A&S events. In this author's opinion, implementation of this suggestion would be more consistent with assessing the attributes needed for critical SF missions and provide a more conclusive assessment of the future SF officer. Additionally, the implementation would assist SFAS in meeting its objectives of

providing SF with a soldier who is capable of meeting the demands of SFQC and future missions.

Though no psychologist, this author tends to believe that the OSS A&S staff evaluated themselves a bit harshly when detailing the A&S program's effectiveness. With the plethora of time and work devoted to establishing the desired qualifications for an OSS operative, the personnel selected by the A&S cadre were immeasurably better prepared to undergo additional training and mission execution. Additionally, a remarkable personality baseline was established that has, is, and will continue to be invaluable in the assessment and selection of special operations personnel. In their pursuit of the "right personnel," the OSS A&S program created a historic milestone in the study of personnel and has inspired numerous other assessment and selection programs, both military and civilian, that are in existence today. Thus, the study of the historical evolutionary process of the OSS A&S program, by organization and function, can prove to be the catalyst for needed change in future assessment and selection processes and greatly assist in the selection of the future "right personnel."

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